

GENERAL MINISTRY: DESIGNING AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL
FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Doctor of Ministry

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is the enabling of laity to fulfill their call to ministry in and through the church and in their day-to-day world through an emphasis on education. The theological framework for the project is the statement on "The Ministry of All Christians," The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 1976. An important understanding for this project is that laity in ministry must be a basic theological position and not a programming technique. Education is viewed in wholistic terms. Education that results in change must focus on the cognitive (intellectual-thinking) and the affective (experiential-feeling) dimensions of both faith and persons.

With theological and educational understandings in mind, a model of education was then designed that used the variety of experiences in a local church as opportunities for learning. Education for ministry does not simply occur in formal class settings, but in worship and preaching, in administrative groups, and in pastoral counseling. Leadership in this educational model is provided by both laity and clergy.

To make the educational model operational, the case study method was used. Laity and clergy together designed and led a variety of experiences during the year: Leadership Development course, Care and Share training, Lenten Small Groups for Prayer and Worship Renewal, and Training for Newly Elected Officers. From those experiences, the contracting process used with the Adult Coordinating Committee, and from

worship/preaching, a number of key elements for an effective model of education were identified. These elements can be used in an educational model for any congregation.

The results of this project included: the involvement of a number of new persons in leadership positions, the establishment of an ongoing group for caring, the increase of understanding and commitment to the ministry of laity and clergy together, and the sensitizing of a number of persons to the possibility for ministry in the midst of one's day-to-day life. It is this writer's conclusion that the many dimensions of the life of the church offer possibilities for education. The more effectively these possibilities are used by lay leaders and clergy, the more likely laity will come to understand their ministry, reflect on that ministry biblically and theologically, and make the commitment to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There is a new emphasis upon the ministry of all Christians in the United Methodist Church. The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, meeting in Portland, Oregon, in 1976, adopted a theological statement about laity and clergy in ministry. The Book of Discipline, 1976, states:

In Christ the love of God came into this world in a unique way. He came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45) and to give his life in and for the world. Christ freely took the nature of a servant, carrying that servanthood to its utmost limits (Philippians 2:7). All Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of outreaching love. The Christian Church, as the Body of Christ, is that community whose members share both his mind and mission. The heart of Christian ministry is shown by a common life of gratitude and devotion, witness and service, celebration and discipleship. All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment. The forms of this ministry are diverse in locale, in interest, and in denominational accent, yet also always catholic in spirit and outreach.¹

Laity have often played a vital role in the life and mission of the Church, but rarely have they been such a central subject of the Church as now. Biblical and theological renewal has helped us to see more clearly that the Church is all of the people of God who have been elected and sent on mission and service in the world. The trend toward a deeper and more serious understanding of the vocation of the laity is full of promises.

¹The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1976), p. 104.

Problem

However, it is one thing for the Church to affirm the ministry of all Christians; it is quite another thing for laity and clergy to actually understand and to be in ministry together. Patterns of clergy-centered ministry are deeply ingrained in the minds and life-styles of clergy and laity alike. Only with intentional effort by lay and clergy leadership will persons in a local congregation begin to accept the responsibility and privilege of ministry as the Body of Christ.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop an educational model that could help make operational the United Methodist statement on general ministry. Through six educational and training experiences it was possible to identify certain components that could be used to design a variety of educational and training experiences in the local church.

Goals

There were four goals to these educational and training experiences. The first and basic goal was to have an effect upon the ethos (identity or life-style) of the congregation. The issue of laity in ministry is not primarily a matter of well organized classes for laity to attend nor a matter of administration, but an issue of how the Church lives as the Body of Christ in the world.² The aim of a program of

²Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 45.

education should be to develop a climate of mutual trust and care that would enable and encourage persons to be more intentional about Christian being and doing together. Leaders from a variety of perspectives emphasize the ethos of a congregation as the foundation for any programming efforts. Custer, whose emphasis is caring, reminds us that people are looking for a caring fellowship where caring is at the very heart of a congregation.³ Fackre, in speaking of evangelism, reminds us that the quality of our life together--sharing, worshipping, praying--is a witness to those outside of the faith.⁴ Pattison, referring to the administration of a local church, states that where people hardly know one another, a pastor will end up with more tasks and responsibilities than one person can ever hope to perform.⁵ Westerhoff, whose focus is Christian education, emphasizes that individual and corporate lives transmit the faith when he says:

Christian education is best understood as the actions between and among faithful persons in an environment that supports the expansion of faith and equips persons for radical life in the world as followers of Jesus Christ.⁶

In short, a congregation teaches what it embodies. If the church is to be effective in ministry, there needs to be a degree of congruence

³Chester Custer, Called to Care (Nashville: Tidings, 1974), p. 48.

⁴Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 68.

⁵Mansell E. Pattison, Pastor and Parish--A Systems Approach (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 22.

⁶John H. Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 49.

between what people say they believe and what they do. That raises a significant problem because of the vast amount of racism, sexism, and know-nothingism that is found among the laity. Thus the goal of a model of education for "general ministry" would need to focus on the ethos of a congregation to the end that it begins to embody what is affirmed in the statement on "The Ministry of All Christians."

The second goal was to make a conscious attempt to equip persons, biblically and theologically, to be members of the Body of Christ who make decisions for ministry and mission. Where clergy have been primary decision makers in the past, one could assume that there was some attempt to think biblically and theologically about their task. Now laity are being put in positions of leadership, but without much biblical, theological, and skill training to be effective members of the Body of Christ.

A recent event at First United Methodist Church in Fargo underscored the need for training and learning in the Christian faith if the laity are expected to make significant decisions for ministry. CENTRE, a non-profit organization concerned with the establishment of a half-way house for ex-offenders, approached First United Methodist Church with a proposal to lease, rent-free, the old three-story parsonage that was standing empty next to the church. The proposal was accepted by the Trustees, the Administrative Board, and then was brought to a meeting of the congregation. There were genuine expressions of fear on the part of older persons who lived nearby and on the part of parents whose children would be in the area after dark. Others were opposed because

they just did not want "those criminals" in the area. Some persons who supported the project accused others of not being Christian. It was even stated that they and their money were not needed! A large number of people said the proposal should be turned down and should not have been brought to a meeting of the congregation because the church should not be embroiled in conflict. Very little was said about biblical and theological rationale for either supporting or opposing the project. Biblical and theological illiteracy among laity is not just their fault. Pastors must bear a share of that responsibility. If laity are to make decisions about ministry and mission, there is the need to consciously equip them for that task. Westerhoff⁷ pushes the issue a bit deeper than simply knowledge. He suggests that the reason so few adults in the Church understand issues surrounding such things as social involvement is that so few have a faith of their own. The task of the Church is to help people move "from a faith given to a faith questioned to a faith owned."⁸

A third goal was to equip people to witness in the world. Persons, first of all, witness in the world through a discernible life-style. Everyday attitudes, decisions, and choices reveal God's love and care for people and the world. Yet, many Christians seem to have two different sets of life-styles. One is for private and Sunday life. The other is for the workday world. All Christians need help and support to

⁷John H. Westerhoff, Tomorrow's Church: A Community of Change (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), p. 24.

⁸Ibid.

reduce the chasm between these two ways of behaving if they are to be effective as the Body of Christ. Secondly, Christians are called to witness to their faith by word. But that is an extremely difficult task if persons are biblically and theologically illiterate. Weber suggests that most Christians read the newspapers more than they read the Bible, and they read both without seeing the connection between the news of the day and the biblical revelation.⁹ There is the need to help Christians grow in their understanding of their faith so that they can speak about it effectively in the midst of the events of the day.

A final goal was to help people who want to be involved in ministry in and through the church. Many people would like to teach, they would like to care for hurting people, and they would like to lead groups; but they do not feel they have the specific skills for the tasks. It is a significant opportunity for the Church to provide training for those persons who have indicated an interest in responding to Christ's call to servanthood in and through the institutional church.

To summarize, it is the vocation of all Christians to be in ministry. It is one thing to affirm that stance; it is quite another to give it shape and form. To speak of that ministry and to enable it to happen through an educational model was the task of this project.

⁹Hans-Ruedi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 42.

Setting

First United Methodist Church, Fargo, North Dakota, where this project was carried out, is a traditional downtown church in a period of transition. People are moving to the edges of the city. The membership has had a steady decline. The congregation is currently re-evaluating its life-style, focus of ministry, and directions for the future. A large number of lay people are participating in leadership positions to help accomplish those tasks. Furthermore, an increasing number of lay people want to be involved in new forms of ministry. They have been requesting preparation and training.

Procedure

This paper will trace briefly some ways the Church has enabled laity to be in ministry in the past. Then follows an exposition of the United Methodist Church's statement on "The Ministry of All Christians." There is then an examination of the implications of this ministry for education. This is followed by a more practical focus on the elements that can be used to design a model for education for a local church. Six case studies from the life of First United Methodist Church will be the main resource for the model. Finally, the paper concludes with some "learnings" from the project.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

A brief survey of how the Church has educated for ministry will provide a context and model for current efforts to educate for ministry. The historical perspective also reminds us that training and preparation of Christians for ministry is not something entirely new.

Jesus and the Disciples

First of all, Jesus called a variety of untrained laity to work with him. He gave them authority over "unclean spirits and the power to heal" (Mark 10:1). When he called them into such ministry he provided them with training. There are numerous instances recorded in the gospels where Jesus instructed the disciples (i.e., Matthew 11:1, 20:17). When he taught in parables he explained their meanings privately to the disciples (Mark 4:34). When they failed in their ministry, such as their inability to heal the epileptic boy, Jesus taught them the reason for their failure (Mark 9:28). After a public teaching on divorce, the disciples asked Jesus to help them understand his words (Mark 10:10). He modeled servanthood for them (John 13:12-16), he modeled the need for recreation and rest (Mark 8:10), and he modeled the responsibility of those who minister to take care of their own needs as well (John 13:2-11). It is important to note that Jesus met the deep, individual

needs of those he called to ministry as well as providing them with skills and understanding.

The Early Church

Education for ministry was an integral part of the early Church. There was a body of teaching known as "The Didache" or "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." This material contained catechetical instruction on Baptism and for taking the Eucharist.¹ It provided instructions for giving to the poor, for handling disputes, and for the selection of leaders.² It also taught what to do with false prophets: "Receive those who teach these things. If he teaches another doctrine, hear him not."³ "The Didache" was probably used by early Christian teachers to instruct Gentile converts in their new faith.⁴

Apparently, there was significant education for ministry taking place in the early Church since some of the first prominent theological thinkers were lay persons. Origen, one of the greatest theologians of his time, was for a long time an unordained member of a group of teachers.⁵ While the role of the laity in the leadership of the Church

¹J. Stevenson, ed., A New Eusebius (London: S.P.C.K., 1960), p. 127.

²Ibid., p. 129.

³Ibid., p. 128.

⁴"Didache," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, p. 841.

⁵George H. Williams, "The Ancient Church," in Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds.), The Layman in Christian History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 42.

declined about the time of the great councils, many laymen were commissioned to teach the faith to non-Christians.⁶ The last part of the fourth century was the last of the great lay theologians: Tyconius and Synesius.⁷ Europe had to wait about 1000 years before the lay theologians reappeared.⁸ Monasticism, of the fourth and fifth centuries, where learning received such crucial importance, was largely a lay movement.⁹

The Middle Ages

While an educated laity was not a strong emphasis in the Church in the Middle Ages, it is important to note that some of the protest movements, which called the Church back to the basic ministry and mission of Jesus Christ, were led by laity. Because the Church failed to instruct the laity in how to express their religious commitments, the Waldensians and the Lollards carried on significant preaching and led in a return to the study of the Bible.¹⁰

St. Francis of Assisi, in the thirteenth century, founded an order that was largely lay in the early days to carry on ministry. He

⁶Ibid., p. 41.

⁷William A. C. Frend, "The Church of the Roman Empire," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 73.

⁸Ibid., p. 77.

⁹Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁰Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 22.

said that the "prayers of simple laymen might save more souls than the sermons of the learned."¹¹

The Reformation

The Reformation movement was largely one of the laity. Many of the laity claimed that the affairs of the Church were their responsibility. They were not simply "yes" people. But here we see the effect of an uneducated and untrained laity. The great reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was not fully expressed in terms of leadership and ministry in and through the Church because "members kept in a state of spiritual immaturity could not suddenly function as spiritual adults."¹² An important corrective to that situation was seen in Calvinism. Lay persons, "ruling elders," were set apart for certain special functions in the Church.¹³

Later, lay leadership could be seen in the arts. The hymn writing of Schütz, Bach, and Handel and the painting of Rembrandt all show a knowledge of the Scriptures.¹⁴

The "spiritualist" movement, which developed after the Reformation, laid great stress on the spiritual priesthood of all believers.

¹¹Christopher Brooke, "The Church of the Middle Ages," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 121.

¹²Kraemer, p. 64.

¹³Martin Schmidt, "The Continent of Europe," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 156.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 156 and 159.

Laymen and laywomen were expected to have such a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the truth of the gospel that the great distance between laity and pastors was reduced.¹⁵

The Wesleyan Revival

During the Wesleyan revival in England, thousands of people found new life in Christ. But John Wesley was not simply satisfied with the conversion of persons. He wanted to enable new converts to be effective witnesses for Christ and to be significant parts of the Body of Christ. Societies were formed and classes within the societies were organized. One of the rules for Methodist Societies was that members would attend "the public worship of God; the ministry of the word either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayers; searching of the Scriptures; and fasting or abstinence."¹⁶ The Societies were divided into classes. These were groups of about a dozen members who met once a week to deepen their spiritual life. The class meetings were not simply study or discussion groups. They were "Christ-centered fellowships where they cared for one another and prepared for life in the world."¹⁷ The class meetings were often led by lay persons. To be a class leader demanded knowledge of Scriptures, leadership abilities, spiritual insight with continued serious study to

¹⁵Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁶Clyde Manschreck, A History of Christianity (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 289.

¹⁷Philip S. Watson, The Message of the Wesleys (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 51.

keep qualified.¹⁸ It is important to note two spin-offs as a result of the involvement of laity in leadership positions. First of all, early Methodism had an impact on labor movements in England because trained laity carried their leadership skills into trade unions.¹⁹ Secondly, these lay people who had some training, who studied rather intensely, and who had practice in leading class meetings, became the key leaders of the development of Methodism in America.²⁰

Early Twentieth Century

In the late 1800's and early 1900's in the United States, professionals, both lay and clergy, began to take over primary leadership and responsibility for the Church. Laity left the world of the Church to the professionals. As a result, all too many laity developed a superficiality about church life and failed to understand the deeper meanings of the Church as the Body of Christ.²¹ They left the planning and substantive work of the Church to the professionals, while the laity found ways to raise money to pay them.

¹⁸Stephen Neill, "Britain," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 207.

¹⁹H. C. Mather, "The British Layman in Modern Times," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 220.

²⁰James Armstrong, United Methodist Primer (Nashville: Tidings, 1976), p. 19.

²¹Howard Grimes, "The United States," in Neill and Weber (eds.), p. 252.

Post-Vatican II

In the late 1950's and early 1960's there came increased signs of growing dissatisfaction by the laity over their superficial role in the Church. Thus the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston in 1954 had "The Rediscovery of the Laity" as one of six major subjects to be discussed. Vatican II placed a renewed emphasis upon the ministry of the laity. Henrik Kraemer's A Theology of the Laity, Yves Congar's Lay People in the Church, Hans-Ruedi Weber's Salty Christians, and Howard Grimes' Rebirth of the Laity are but a few of the books written calling for fuller participation in the Church on the part of the laity.

Accompanying the renewal of the laity was a new mission theology, the women's movement, and third world liberation movements. At a more practical level, there developed in local churches an emphasis on adult education, adult growth experiences, and skill training events, all aimed at helping lay persons become more effective in ministry. More recently, the systems approach to institutional life has been applied to the life of the church. Professional clergy are viewed as facilitators who enable laity to grow in an understanding of the faith and in leadership skills so they can carry on their ministry.

Summary

There are two conclusions that can be made from this brief historical survey. First of all, the Church has educated laity for ministry from its earliest beginnings. It is important to note that

renewal in the Church corresponds closely to the times of significant lay training and involvement in ministry.

Secondly, the Church has educated and trained laity for a variety of ways to carry out their ministry. We note in the teachings of Jesus and St. Francis that laity were educated and trained to care for people, a task often left to professional clergy. Laity have been educated and trained for ministry within the Church. We noted that laity have served as theologians, as hymn writers, and as leaders of small groups. Calvinism serves as an example of how laity have been trained to serve in important leadership roles in the practical administration of the Church. Furthermore, laity who have been educated and trained in the Church have made an impact on the world, often in and through their normal routines of life. Weber suggests that the real impact of Christianity for the first three centuries was through servants, workers, and shepherds, whose work and word made an impact on people.²² Class leaders in the Wesleyan revival, trained in leadership skills within the Church, were able to translate those skills into the arena of the labor unions. Trained and educated laity made a significant impact on the social structures and problems in the United States in the 1960's. Finally, laity who have been educated and trained in the Church find help and support to be persons of integrity for all of life.

²²Hans-Ruedi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 27.

Chapter 3

A THEOLOGY OF THE MINISTRY OF ALL CHRISTIANS

It is crucial that educational models for ministry grow out of and are consistent with theological understandings of ministry. Indeed, the ministry of the laity must be an essential theological understanding of the Church. If the new emphasis upon the laity is simply a program assumption or a technique to do planning, it could easily become a subtle form of manipulation. The following theological statement on the ministry of the laity is based upon "The Ministry of All Christians" section of The Discipline of The United Methodist Church.¹

The Servanthood of Christ

The heart of Christian ministry is that God came into this world in Christ, who was one who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45).² Jesus was chosen by God to be servant of all (Matthew 12:18). God's care and concern for people can be seen in the incarnation. Note that the language used by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, according to Luke, is a language of love and caring for hurting persons:

¹The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1976), pp. 104-105.

²Ibid., p. 104.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
 because he has anointed me to
 preach good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim release
 to the captives
 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are
 oppressed,
 to proclaim the acceptable year of
 the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

Servanthood is central in the life of Jesus. Ministry, as seen by him, was not simply religious activities, but it was identification with persons who had been passed by in our kind of world. He carried servanthood to its utmost limits when he "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7).³

One important image of servanthood is the figure of the shepherd. Jesus "saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). This image is used also in the closing benediction of Hebrews, ". . . our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20). The ultimate expression of servanthood was in the crucifixion: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11)." Osborn notes, "Here we see the form of the Servant fitted to the cruel shape of the cross."⁴ The heart of all Christian ministry is Jesus the Christ who came into this world as the Servant and whose servanthood often took the form of the shepherd.

³Ibid.

⁴Ronald E. Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1967), p. 122.

Christian Ministry as Christ's Ministry

"All of Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of outreaching love."⁵ One of the central images of the Church is that of the Body of Christ. The Church is that ". . . historically continuous body of persons who follow Christ."⁶ Those who followed Christ were set on a path of a significantly different future. Those he transformed, ". . . he bound into a community who were to be instruments of his mission in the world."⁷

Jesus was a servant. Those who bind themselves to him take their cues for their life-style from him. Thus authentic Christian life is servanthood. In order to equip his people for this task, God gives a variety of gifts.

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11, 12)

The individual, unique gifts are then brought together to make a corporate witness in the world.

Jesus was a servant. His followers are not more than he was. If Jesus related to the world as a servant, so are his followers to relate in the same way. To be a follower of Jesus means that one is called to abandon self-glorification and exist for service. Indeed, if

⁵Book of Discipline, p. 104.

⁶James M. Gustafson, Treasure in Earthen Vessels (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 123.

⁷Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 143.

the Church is the Body of Christ, the servant Jesus continues his work in the world when his followers accept the task of servanthood.

Obviously, the Church exists to meet the variety of needs of its members. Persons who are a part of the life of the Church can expect to receive new energy for their day-to-day work, to sense serenity, or to discover a framework for making life's decisions. That the Church meets the needs of its members is important. Indeed, Christians cannot truly love and serve unless they have first experienced God's love in their own lives. The Church cannot expect its members to be a part of healing hurts if they are dealing with a significant crisis in their own lives. The Church is called to be a caring fellowship for its own members.

But God's gifts carry with them responsibility. No one can minister to another unless he or she is willing to deny self enough in order to create the space where God can do His work in and through his people. Those who follow the living Christ are to be actively engaged in the world. Christians, as the Body of Christ, are to have a bias towards those who are being denied the kingdom's blessings: the poor, the oppressed, the hurt, and the captive.

The servant motif must be kept in focus lest the Church turn in upon itself, its members become excessively narcissistic, and they develop into spectators. Those who confess "Jesus Christ as Lord" accept his call to ministry. Going into the world to speak the word and do the deed is not an addendum to one's life. Servanthood is the natural life-style (vocation or calling) of every Christian.

All Are Called to Ministry

"All Christians are called to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment."⁸ That is to say, the whole Church is called to service. There is no room in the Church for someone to say, "I don't have the ability to serve," or "I'm only a layperson." In Baptism, all are stamped with the servant seal.⁹ In the act of Baptism, people cease "being civilians and become soldiers actively engaged in Christ's battle for the world."¹⁰ By virtue of Baptism, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9).

Is this self-understanding for Christians possible? Can the servanthood of all become an integral part of the Church? Trueblood suggests that the new strategy for the Church is to convince and then equip the unordained for their ministry, but they must be convinced first.¹¹ A discussion with the Administrative Board and Council of Ministries at First United Methodist Church (Appendix C) confirmed Trueblood's fear. The majority of participants did not see the ministry

⁸Book of Discipline, p. 104.

⁹Kraemer, p. 153.

¹⁰Hans-Ruedi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 25.

¹¹Elton Trueblood, The New Man for Our Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 112.

of all Christians as a realistic possibility at First Church because "too many hide in a church this size," "people have too many other involvements they feel are more important," "the church is not given first priority," "people have been turned off because too much of the work in the church has only been busywork," and "the pews are too comfortable." The message begins to come through that laity often see themselves as "part-time Christians," with little responsibility for ministry.

Realistically, one should not assume that because "all are called to ministry," all are going to respond. People have varying levels of intentionality and commitment in a congregation. Schroeder suggests that less than 10 percent of the members of a church are highly involved and deeply committed; one-half to one-third have a significant measure of commitment; about one-fourth of the members are marginally involved; about 10 percent have their names on the roll.¹² In short, not all recognize the call to servanthood nor the gifts God has given them for ministry.

There are persons who not only catch a glimpse of what it means to be a servant, but they also desire to fulfill that ministry to which they are called. In the discussion with the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries at First Church (Appendix C) there were those who desired to teach in an area where they had knowledge and skills, there were some who wanted to participate in worship, there were others

¹²W. Widick Schroeder, "The Emergence of the Voluntary Church," in Clyde L. Manschreck and Barbara Brown Zikmund (eds.), The American Religious Experiment: Piety and Practicality (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1976), p. 23.

who wanted to learn how to "care," "listen," "counsel," and to "witness," and there were some who wanted to become more intentional as Christians in their day-to-day routines.

All Christians are called and sent to reveal God's love for this world, not by just being active in a religious organization, but by a style of life that affirms Christ's lordship over them and the whole world. All of the activities of the church--worship, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, administration--should have as their goal the helping of the laity to become the servants they are called to be in Christ.

General Ministry and the Ordained Ministry

"Within the people of God there are those called to specialized ministries of Word, Sacrament, and Order--the ordained clergy."¹³ These persons, because of special "gifts and graces," give themselves to the work of the Church and to enable others to be in ministry. Osborn rightly reminds us that we need to be careful not to blur some rather clear distinctions in biblical thought by speaking of all Christians as ministers.¹⁴ A high doctrine of the laity does not exclude, but rather demands, a high doctrine of the clergy.¹⁵

All Christians have a common calling to ministry, but within that general calling a number of "offices" were established with certain specific functions and certain requirements to fulfill them. There need

¹³Book of Discipline, p. 104.

¹⁴Osborn, p. 69.

¹⁵Weber, p. 17.

to be "servants of the Word who serve as guides to God's people in the faithful fulfillment of their servanthood."¹⁶ The ordained clergy fulfill this function in a variety of ways. They give focus to what it means to be a disciple; that is, clergy model servanthood. This does not mean that clergy are the "God-persons" of the Church. Rather, what is true for clergy is true for every man or woman who wants to live his or her life as a follower of Christ. Clergy then help laity discover and develop the gifts God has given them for their ministry. St. Paul said that leaders are "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12). Pattison, speaking from a systems analysis perspective, says much the same thing: ". . . the leader potentiates the action of others who in turn potentiate the leader."¹⁷ Clergy serve as the leaders that are needed within an organization to help it function properly. Thus clergy serve as visioners, encouragers, leaders, preachers, teachers, and servants.

It may be important to say that not all clergy will have the same "enabling style" of leadership. But it seems crucial that clergy have a rather clear understanding that laity and clergy are in ministry together. Clergy can then live out their calling so that it neither violates their integrity nor the calling of the laity to servanthood.

If laity are helped to know the relationship between the clergy and laity in ministry, they will have a better understanding of their

16Osborn, p. 73.

17Mansell E. Pattison, Pastor and Parish--A Systems Approach (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 23.

calling. If clergy are helped to understand their relationship to laity in ministry, they might well resist the tendency to gain too much power in the life of the church. Clergy are called to guide the laity in their fulfillment of servanthood.

The Church as Covenant Community

It needs to be further stated that God calls his people into a covenant community. The Church is a covenant community because of God's initiative and because people make a rational decision to be bound to him and one another.¹⁸

Today's churches are made up of members who see their relationship to God in extremely individualistic terms. Persons experience God in the depths of their lives. They respond to him with worship and devotion. It does not seem as if other persons are needed. The electronic media, which brings religion directly into the home, only spawns more individualism.

But it is clear that Christians are not meant to stand independent of one another. They are called to be a part of a living organism--the Body of Christ. Baptism is a symbol of birth into that body. Holy Communion is the symbolic meal that nourishes the body. The need for that body becomes clear when the members of the body attempt to be faithful servants in the world. It is almost impossible for an individual to fulfill Christ's ministry in isolation. In light of the many needs and hurts of the world, many Christians recognize that no one is strong

¹⁸Gustafson, p. 86.

enough or devout enough to operate alone. Members of the community of faith need the support, the resources, the insights, and the encouragement of one another as they engage the world. Paul reminded the community of Christians at Galatia to "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). The gifts of the Holy Spirit were "for the common good" (I Corinthians 12:7).

Christians cannot be the people they are meant to be without creative interdependence upon one another. All, laity and clergy alike, need to learn to give and receive healing from one another. There is the need for honest feedback to one another, opportunities to evaluate decisions each is called on to make, and the need to develop personal support systems.

General Ministry as a Task

The covenant community "stretches out to meet human needs wherever love and service may convey God's love and ours."¹⁹ The focus of ministry must always be the world. There is a danger that Christians can be so tuned in to meeting the needs of one another that they forget the world with its spiritual hungers and physical hurts. The people of God do not exist primarily for themselves, but for the world. Worship, study, support, and caring should all inspire and motivate Christians to join with God in his work in the world. Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) to remind the community of faith that the world is the place where service is carried out.

¹⁹Book of Discipline, p. 105.

Sometimes that ministry will be carried on through the institutional Church. Christians will gather together, organize, carefully identify needs that exist, plan, and work together to accomplish a task. The Church has been able to respond to significant hurts in a society when the community of faith has put its best knowledge, skills, and commitment together.

But it would be misleading to say that the Church working together is the only way ministry can be done. Most of the time, service will be carried on by individual Christians who recognize, affirm, and seek the support of the community of faith. The frustration of many clergy is that they really do not touch the structures of daily life. But in the person of the laity, the Church is present in every area of human activity. The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, 1954, said:

The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices, and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio, and television, in the relationships of nations. Very often it is said that the church should "go into these spheres," but the fact is that the church is already in these spheres in the persons of the laity.²⁰

One way in which the Church will have a great effect on the world will be through individual Christians who will work out their servant lifestyles in and through their occupations. A congregation cannot program that kind of ministry. But what faithful servants of Christ do need and want is the assurance that they are not alone. They need to come together for worship, for understanding, and for caring when they

²⁰Weber, p. 3.

themselves are hurting. The covenant community can support the ministry of individual Christians among their peers at work, in community involvements, within the family, and at play.

Whether ministry is carried on through the Church as an institution or in one's personal realm, there is the need to sense and experience the support of the community of faith. Fackre suggests that the community of faith can keep the words and deeds of individual Christians together; and that in keeping words and deeds together, Christians become pointers to the God who calls all of humanity to turn from darkness to light and in that light see the brother and sister in Christ and serve the neighbor in need.²¹

General Ministry as a Gift

There may be Christians who feel unfit for the task of serving one another and the world. Kraemer reminds Christians that the Church, in its being and calling is not dependent upon the fitness of its members, but upon the recreative power inherent in the Church's being and calling as the Body of Christ.²² He further states that it is not idealistic to call for the participation of the laity in the church's calling, rather it is a new grasp of and commitment to the meaning of God's redemptive purpose with people and the world.²³ To emphasize

²¹Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 105.

²²Kraemer, p. 90.

²³Ibid., p. 91.

that all Christians are called as servants is one way of emphasizing God's power and grace. While Christians do not bring in God's kingdom, their loyalty to Christ will plunge them into service in that kingdom with whatever gifts they have been given.

Summary

The people of God go into the world as a servant community, not only in the sense that members of that community serve and support one another, but in the sense that all serve in the world. All members have the same calling. All members have the same obligation to provide mutual support and ministry in the world. All members, laity and clergy alike, have the same calling and responsibility because all live by the same grace.

But in reality not all will see and accept Christ's call to servanthood. The call sometimes falls on deaf ears. Others hear the call, but do not feel they are capable or worthy of such a ministry. Thus the church is faced with the continual task of helping members of a congregation know who they are and how they can begin to fulfill their ministry. One of the ways to accomplish that task is through education for ministry.

Chapter 4

IMPLICATIONS OF GENERAL MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION IN A LOCAL CHURCH

The ministry of all Christians, while a basic theological understanding and not a program assumption, has implications for an educational model in the local church. A number of significant dimensions for the education task arise from an understanding of laity in ministry.

Adult Education Priority

First of all, adult education will be one of the key concerns for the pastor's ministry. It has been stated that many laity are not involved in ministry. In the Administrative Board and Council on Ministries discussions at First Church, a variety of reasons for non-involvement surfaced. Some laity were not involved because they do not understand Christ's call to ministry; others were not involved because that was not their understanding of membership when they joined the Church; some had the, "Here I am, minister to me," mentality; others wanted to be involved but did not seem to have the motivation; while others had so many personal needs that they could not seem to focus on the needs of others. It should also be noted that many laity who are involved in ministry desire to move to even deeper levels of understanding and commitment.

The clergy, who affirms the ministry of all Christians, will be able to accept members with different degrees of commitment and

spiritual maturation and develop multiple programs of study, training, and fellowship.¹ The pastor will see the many functions in the life of the congregation as opportunities for teaching--pastoral calling, administration (Appendix C), and preaching (Appendix F), as well as informal study and growth groups. The pastor will use every opportunity he or she can to help laity grow in an understanding of the faith and in commitment to the ministry Christ has given to all.

The Indicative Approach

Secondly, at the heart of any approach to education in the Church will be the assumption that all Christians are called to ministry by virtue of their Baptism. To view laity as unable to carry on effective ministry or to assume that they will be unwilling to be in ministry is to admit defeat before one has started. Carr stated it clearly:

The Biblical message is, "You are a minister; therefore fulfill your ministry." The authentic Christian life is ministry, and our fulfillment comes in and through taking up that ministry which is already ours. I believe that the deepest need of persons is to feel that they can be good news for this world of ours, to feel that they can make a difference.²

Henri Nouwen elaborates on that idea by suggesting that the vocation of clergy is to make people aware of their gifts, help remove the paralyzing influence of fatalism, offer visions that help people see their

¹W. Widick Schroeder, "The Emergence of the Voluntary Church," in Clyde L. Manschreck and Barbara Brown Zikmund (eds.), The American Religious Experiment: Piety and Practicality (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1976), p. 34.

²John Lynn Carr, "Immersing for Ministry: Education and Evangelism in Church and Seminary" (paper presented at Pastor as Evangelist and Educator, Denver, Colo., December 1978).

opportunities to serve, and help them respond with concrete action.³ That is to say, clergy are called to evoke in others their potential, not by saying, "You should," but by saying, "You are." This approach was shown to have an exhilarating effect on several laity at First Church when they were told that they were being invited to be a part of the Care and Share group because of the caring qualities others noticed in them. The pastor who has an indicative approach can help laity accept their responsibility and privilege to be in ministry.

A Wholistic Methodology

Thirdly, any educational model will deal with both the cognitive (intellectual-thinking) and affective (experiential-feeling) dimensions of the faith and persons.⁴ Learning is not simply a matter of learning facts or new skills. Learning is a matter of changing and growing emotional factors as well.

In the variety of experiences that might arise within the total life of the church or in specifically designed educational experiences, there will need to be a focus on the persistent life concerns of the people involved. To build on actual needs rather than assumed needs is one important way to get a person involved in a learning experience. Most laity have strong feelings, hopes, and goals that need to be surfaced no matter with which group they participate. People will have

³Henri J. M. Nouwen, Creative Ministry (Garden City: Image Books, 1978), p. 71.

⁴Harold D. Minor (ed.), Techniques and Resources for Guiding Adult Groups (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 119.

anxieties with which leaders will need to deal. Anxieties serve as threats. People may be prevented from taking action or from being in ministry unless the anxieties are confronted and defined. In the first session of the Care and Share group at First Church, a number of people became greatly concerned that they were going to be asked to be "counselors." Some time was spent dealing with those anxieties. If they had not been dealt with, several persons might not have returned and they would have been lost for what later turned out to be some significant caring on their part. People find it difficult to grow, change, and work productively if they are anxious or facing significant problems. An educational model will be concerned with the affective dimensions of faith and persons.

An educational model will deal with the cognitive dimensions of faith and persons, too. There needs to be a focus on content as people are helped to see that their day-to-day lives are a part of some ultimate realities. Christians need to consciously think about the "ministry of all Christians" and "the servant motif" as a style of life. That means there will need to be a focus on the Bible in a variety of settings. Time and again, vitality in lay ministry has been related to new understandings of such images as the Body of Christ, the people of God, and servant ministry. Clergy will help laity immerse themselves in Scriptures, without which all will become orphans, cut off from the nourishing roots of the faith. Trueblood comments, "It is an intelligent practice to get one's marching orders before one moves, for

movement may be in the wrong direction."⁵ Osborn, using a similar military image, states that the writer of Ephesians emphasized the need to train souls using the discipline of a military camp preparing for work of ministry and for the edification of Christ's Body.⁶ One of "the most potent means of growth in the life of the spirit is contemplation of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ."⁷

Furthermore, persons can study the Scriptures against the backdrop of their own needs. People can begin to see that what they feel and experience is really a part of universal experiences. Where the Gospel and personal needs intersect is probably the most significant teaching-learning point. The Bible, which speaks to both the cognitive and affective levels of persons, will be a key resource in an educational experience and for any educational model.

Another important dimension to an educational model is the need to help laity think theologically about life and ministry and to help them understand the dynamics of the world with the best theological insights. All too many laity lack even the most fundamentals in theology. Tasks are undertaken, ministry carried on, and decisions made without ever thinking or reflecting theologically. Kraemer makes a stronger indictment when he says that the modern church is really like

⁵Elton Trueblood, The New Man for Our Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 73.

⁶Ronald Osborn, In Christ's Place (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1967), p. 182.

⁷Trueblood, p. 76.

the primitive church in many respects--to a great extent ignorant and spiritually illiterate.⁸ Rigorous theological thinking can help equip laity for ministry and life. Fackre, in speaking of evangelism, states that as a Christian struggles to get "the story out one is driven back to getting the story straight."⁹ That insight holds true for every dimension of ministry. The Church needs to help the laity think theologically about their tasks and lives.

A final area of concern in the "cognitive" dimension in an educational model is skill training. Laity, first of all, need to be helped to carry on ministry within the institution. The development of an understanding of administration as a process that can help carry on supportive and outreach functions in the name of Christ is crucial. There is so much negativism surrounding "administration" that many dedicated persons shy away from any tasks that carry even the slightest hint of institutionalism. Lay persons can be helped to develop leadership skills so they feel more comfortable leading a group, or making decisions, or dealing with conflict, and in the use of evaluation. It is difficult to ask persons to take positions of leadership unless there is training, skill practice, and ongoing, on-the-job supervision for them. Too often the Church has asked people to do administrative tasks, but has not provided training for them. Effectiveness seems to be related to training. Persons who are asked to do tasks but are not trained

⁸Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 159.

⁹Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 16.

seem to become discouraged and disenchanted too quickly, while persons who are helped to sharpen their skills and increase their insights become excited about ministry.

Secondly, laity need to be helped to sharpen skills so that they can carry on ministry in the world. Through education laity can be helped to reflect biblically and theologically about their own personal vocations as Christians. Osborn observes that within the Church we have many "practical atheists who say they believe in God but organize their lives and make their decisions and face their deepest problems as though he did not exist."¹⁰ But more, laity meet, work next to, and recreate with persons every day who are hurting. They need to learn about and practice some helping skills. There are others who would like to discover more effective ways to be involved in the political arena. Other Christians would like to deal with issues of prejudice in the community. Others would like to know how to have an impact on television programming. Westerhoff is accurate when he says that too often the Church has been mindless in its engagement with the world: "Social action without knowledge and hard-nosed thinking is irresponsible."¹¹ It is important to equip Christians for that task.

An effective educational model will be wholistic. It will take into account the persistent life concerns of persons, their anxieties,

¹⁰Osborn, p. 17.

¹¹John H. Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 67.

and their hurts. It will include the Scriptures, theological reflection, and skill training.

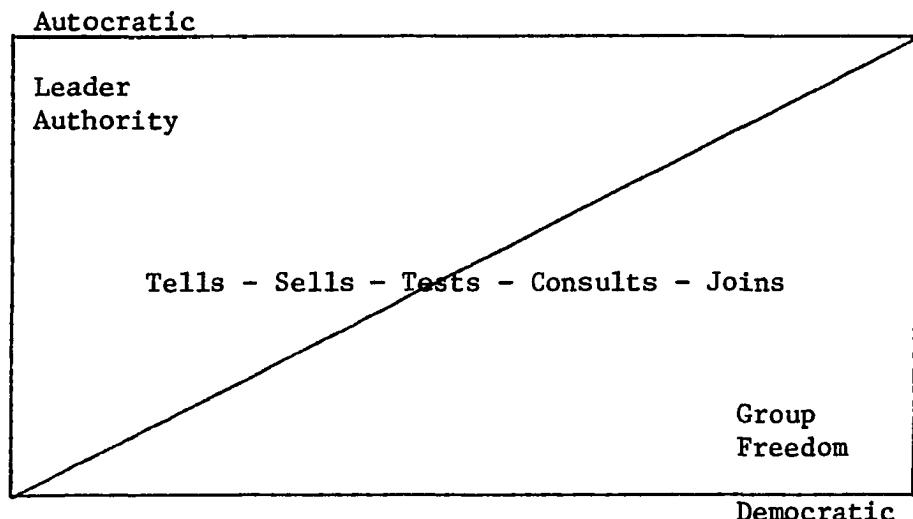
Clergy Leadership Style

Fourthly, the ministry of all Christians has direct implications for the leadership style of the clergy in relationship to the total educational enterprise in a local church. Clergy who desire to enable laity to be in ministry will consciously develop a leadership style that allows for freedom and initiative on the part of laity.

Model. The pastor serves as a model as opposed to simply being a teller. He or she can help set the tone for the congregation by what he or she does. If all Christians should learn more about their faith, the pastor can continue to learn and grow. If it is important to reflect biblically and theologically about life or actions within the church, the pastor will make special efforts to show the relevance of faith for life or church decisions. If the goal is for more knowledge and reflection in dealing with social issues, the pastor will be careful not to make premature statements.

Catalyst. The pastor can serve as a catalyst. To be in ministry together with laity does not mean that the pastor must now assume a passive role. Clergy may need to initiate, advocate, goad, stimulate, or speak the prophetic word in order for either significant educational ministry or other forms of ministry to happen. Clergy need to be careful not to use their position to force or manipulate, however.

Facilitator. The pastor is a facilitator. The clergy enable and help to equip laity to fulfill their call to ministry. The following diagram helps to visualize that role:¹²



Movement to the right of this diagram would be more in line with the understanding that all Christians are in ministry together. At the right, there is consideration together, identification of problems together, learning together, and decisions are reached in consultation with one another. When the Administrative Board and Council on Ministries at First Church were asked what helped or hindered them in their ministry, several persons said that the current leadership style of the pastors helped them. The Adult Coordinating Committee specifically evaluated this writer's leadership style using the above diagram. All persons checked somewhere between "consults" or "joins" with the exception of one who circled the center three. The latter evaluator raised an important issue when he said that the pastor will not or

¹²Minor, p. 23.

should not be completely to the right at all times. Different situations call for different kinds of leadership. Laity will be at different levels of understanding and skills. But one thing is clear. The pastor who develops a facilitative style will not dictate nor treat laity as children.

The leadership style of the pastor is an important ingredient of an educational model. A leadership style that models, envisions, and facilitates in the variety of educational opportunities and experiences is consistent with the theological understanding that all Christians are in ministry together.

Bilateral Teaching

In the fifth place, it is assumed in this model of education that the pastor will be directly involved in formal teaching experiences. To be consistent with the theological understanding of the ministry of all Christians, teaching must be bilateral in emphasis. This style is open-ended, ideas and outcome are not predetermined, and it is assumed that the teacher learns too. Adults see themselves as self-directed individuals. They react or should react to learning that treats them as dependent persons. The message they get from this kind of a teacher is, "I'm competent. You're not."

The ideal would be to work towards less "teacher-directed" experiences, but how much will depend somewhat on the level of understanding and motivation of the participants. Less "teacher-directed" experiences mean that less planning is done by the teacher, more assessment

of needs is done by the learners, and goals are mutually negotiated.¹³ Freire's suggestion that those who are committed to the liberation of persons must reject the "banking concept" of education and adopt the "problem-posing approach" is applicable to those committed to the ministry of all Christians as well.¹⁴ The "problem-posing approach" consists of understanding as opposed to transferral of information, and thus it enables people to develop the ability to perceive critically the way they exist in the world.¹⁵ The pastor, as an enabler, will use a teaching approach that affirms the abilities of people to utilize their rich experiences.

There is obviously more risk for persons who are asked to make public their needs, feelings, ideas, and insights. In the educational experiences at First Church, people said, in a variety of ways, "You tell us what we need to know and do." There is more security in following a leader. It is also true that one is less responsible for learning and for decisions if someone else is doing the main leading. The bilateral approach has within it the possibility of urging persons to re-examine previously held beliefs, of raising levels of awareness, and of increasing commitment to one's own new perceptions. If that can happen, the risks in bilateral teaching are worth the rewards.

¹³Malcolm Knowles, Self-Directed Learning (New York: Association Press, 1975), p. 60.

¹⁴Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), p. 66.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 71.

Community Building

Finally, if all Christians are members of a covenant community and are in ministry together, then an educational model will specifically focus on building and supporting that sense of community. At one level, there is the need for members of the Church to know the church symbols, common language, and great traditions.¹⁶ Members need to be aware of that which binds them together. Not only is there the need to understand the language and the symbols intellectually, there is the need to make some personal identification with those meanings. The most significant place where this awareness and identification takes place is through corporate worship.

At another level, there is the need to consciously structure the learning environment to bring people into a depth relationship with one another. This can be done in the context of administrative meetings. Time can be set aside to find out what is happening in the lives of persons. But probably the best place for this to happen, especially in larger congregations, is in the small group. It is interesting to note that some of the most positive responses to any of the educational experiences at First Church came from "Journey In--Journey Out" and "Care and Share." Several persons said, "This is what the church is meant to be." These were the two groups where there was a conscious attempt to bring the hurts, needs, and concerns of people to mutual awareness within a biblical and theological context. An effective

¹⁶James M. Gustafson, Treasure in Earthen Vessels (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 10.

model of education in the local church will focus on the development and support of the covenant community.

Summary

It is clear from this suggested model that an educational ministry does not just focus on classes led by the pastor. Study, training, worship, service, and sharing all combine together to help laity understand and enter more fully into their call to ministry. Education is viewed as a primary focus for all of the life of the congregation.

Chapter 5

ELEMENTS OF AN EDUCATIONAL DESIGN FOR MINISTRY

Now let us focus on specific elements that should be a part of a model of education in the local church and that should be considered for inclusion in individual educational experiences that might be designed. These elements are drawn from the six case studies which are based on experiences that took place at First United Methodist Church, Fargo, North Dakota, in 1977-78:

1. Adult Coordinating Committee Contract (Appendix A)
2. Leadership Development Course (Appendix B)
3. Training for Newly Elected Officers (Appendix C)
4. "Journey In--Journey Out"--Lenten Small Group Experience of Prayer and Worship Renewal (Appendix D)
5. Care and Share Training (Appendix E)
6. Sermon (Appendix F)

Worship and Preaching

One of the main concerns of this project has been to affect the "ethos" of the congregation. It is this writer's contention that a key place to do that is through worship and preaching. The largest number of the members of any congregation gather together on Sunday morning. Corporate worship is a means to strengthen and support all of God's people in ministry. Worship can help create a mentality of hope,

confidence, searching, and commitment. Carefully planned worship services that touch reality and convey healing plus sound biblical and theological preaching can serve as significant channels for education, growth, and opportunities for commitment.

Sunday worship and preaching can be carefully planned to coincide with other events in the life of the church. The sermon, "Ministry Together" (Appendix F), was preached just after the election of new officers and prior to their training. The sermon was printed and mailed to all of the members through the church newsletter. The sermons each Sunday in Lent were on the same themes that the small groups were studying and experiencing (Appendix D, p. 115). Worship and preaching should be viewed as basic elements of any model of education.

Biblical Context

The heart of the total life of the Church and of specific educational experiences will be the Scriptures. Without a biblical focus a church might find itself continually following the latest fad. It has already been indicated that strong biblical preaching will have an important impact upon the total life of the church. It needs to be further stated that how Scriptures are used in worship and preaching will set the tone for how the Bible is viewed and used elsewhere in the life of the church.

Within the life of the congregation there should be ongoing classes for Bible study and short-term courses during such seasons as Advent and Lent. The Bible can be a basic resource in other experiences

as well. For example, the Bible was used in the discussions on "The Ministry of All Christians" by the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries. The Leadership Development Course used Nehemiah, who carefully planned and deployed leadership in the rebuilding of the Temple. The reading of selected parts of the Bible was an integral part of "Journey In--Journey Out." In the Care and Share group, the Bible was used as the basis for devotions, guided meditation, reflection, and for role play. The Bible can serve in a variety of ways as the basis for the educational enterprise of the Church.

Theological Foundation

One of the key needs in the life of the laity, and clergy also, is the ability to think theologically about events in their lives, in the Church, and in the world. As with the Bible, strong theological preaching can help move a large segment of the congregation to firmer and clearer understanding of their faith. Administrative meetings might take on a whole new dimension of meaning if time was allowed for either laity or clergy to reflect theologically on the decisions made during the meeting. Furthermore, people might begin to think theologically about issues as they were being discussed. Small groups could be formed that would have a strong theological focus, such as "Journey In--Journey Out." Theological thinking needs to be at the core of the total educational enterprise in the congregation.

Prayer

Without sounding overly pietistic, it seems clear that the life of the Church can be and should be undergirded with prayer. Prayer was a distinguishing characteristic of the early Church (Acts 2). All through Christian history, significant renewal in the life of the Church has been linked with the renewal of prayer life.¹ Prayer helps to focus more clearly on the reason for being, puts persons in touch with the Source of all of life, and enables them to be more open with one another. Prayer is obviously a part of worship and should be a part of planning groups, administrative groups, skill groups, and sharing groups.

Persistent Life Concerns/Personal Issues

If an educational ministry is to have an impact upon the lives of the people involved, their concerns and personal issues must be considered. Indeed, needs, problems, interests, and anxieties are all strong motivational qualities that a leader will want to surface and keep clearly in mind as an element for education in the local church.

All of the experiences reported in the case studies grew out of stated needs and concerns of the laity. Because of anxiety over leadership responsibilities, training was planned and the leadership course was developed. Because of the desire to be more effective in helping people in day-to-day contacts, the Care and Share group was

¹Hans-Ruedi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 37.

formed. Because of the desire to grow in devotional life, to have more intimate contact with other Christians, and to have a richer experience in corporate worship, "Journey In--Journey Out" was designed. Once the groups were organized, one of the first steps was to identify in more specific ways the persistent life concerns and personal issues of participants.

Sermons, if they are expected to be a part of the model for education, will need to deal with the questions, hurts, and experiences of the people. Dialogue in preaching is not a technique as much as it is a way of relating to people. Nouwen suggests that dialogue is "an attitude of the preacher who is able to enter into a relationship in which the partners can really influence each other."² That kind of preaching can be educational and because it takes seriously the life experiences of laity it is a significant expression of the ministry of all Christians.

The needs, problems, interests, and anxieties of people are all strong motivational qualities for learning and should be basic elements in an educational model. Pastors and lay leaders will find creative ways to identify and respond to those people-centered concerns.

Community Building

Since one of the objectives of this model of education for the local church was to equip persons to become more conscious members of

²Henri J. M. Nouwen, Creative Ministry (Garden City: Image Books, 1978), p. 35.

the Body of Christ, an important task of leadership is to structure experiences that bring people into depth relationships with each other. It is possible to set aside a time at most church events, including administrative meetings, where participants are a little less task oriented and a little more people oriented. Time could be given to share what is going on in the lives of one another.

It is often said that it is difficult to build community in corporate worship when people only view one another from the back and have little or no chance to speak to one another. Yet there is something about corporate worship that can help people sense themselves to be a part of the community of faith. That awareness might be increased if, from time to time, the pastor reflected on expressions of community he or she has noticed in the life of the congregation. At the time of tragic deaths or following a natural disaster, people often surround one another with care and support. The pastor, with an indicative approach, might say, "This is the Body of Christ in action."

One of the best ways to help build community, where significant growth can take place, is through small groups, especially in larger congregations. Everything that has been mentioned in terms of elements for an educational model finds its most effective expression in the small group of six to twelve persons. In the small group there can be effective worship; biblical and theological perspectives can be stated or studied; prayer seems to come easier and is more personal, and the needs and hurts of people can be surfaced, dealt with, and often healed. The evaluation of the small groups, "Journey In--Journey Out" and Care

and Share, indicated that community was experienced within those groups as it had not been experienced elsewhere in the church. Participants met one another on deeper levels than they had ever met before. There were changes in behavior toward others: "I have a stronger commitment toward corporate worship now." "I have taken advantage of several opportunities to care." "I pray for others now." The small group is an effective way to help people become more conscious members of the community of faith and members of the Body of Christ in ministry.

Lay Leadership

Lay leadership is a crucial element in a model of education for the local church. Because of the understanding that all Christians are in ministry, there is the need to consciously involve laity, as equals, in planning, designing, and leading groups. An educational ministry can be greatly expanded, as in "Journey In--Journey Out," or enriched, as in Care and Share, through the involvement of laity in leadership roles.

Recruitment. Because lay leadership is such a key element to an educational model in the local church, special emphasis will need to be given to recruitment.

How one goes about that task of recruiting depends somewhat upon the nature of the group or what is to be accomplished. For example, at First Church, persons nominated by the Committee on Nominations and Personnel, to be elected at the annual meeting, were secured on the basis of expressed interest as much as possible. During the Every

Member Commitment program, persons were encouraged to make a pledge of time and talent as well as a pledge of money. The form that was used gave people a variety of options for service, but it included all of the administrative positions that would open in the church that year.

The recruitment for the Leadership Development course was done in relationship to the nomination process. As persons were contacted to accept nominations, they were informed that the course would be available right after the annual meeting. The invitation was also extended to others through the regular church channels so that anyone who might have an interest in developing leadership skills for the future would feel that they could participate.

Members of the Adult Coordinating Committee and the Care and Share group were carefully chosen. Persons who seemed to have special gifts and interest in the goals of each group were contacted personally. They were told about the purpose of each group and why they were being asked to be a part of it. They were invited to these leadership positions in such a way that they were free to say "Yes" or "No" without feeling guilty if they declined.

Another method of recruitment used at First Church was the open invitation. Through Sunday worship announcements and the church newsletter, people were invited to be a part of "Journey In--Journey Out," as either a small group leader or a member of the group. Anyone in the congregation could respond at either level of involvement. Those who agreed to be small group leaders were informed that they would receive training and would be provided with adequate materials. The rationale

for the general invitation was to see if persons would respond who were not normally considered leaders. Of the eight who did volunteer, three were persons who had not previously led groups.

Finally, if one takes seriously the ministry of all Christians, laity cannot simply be enlisted for a preconceived set of church options. An important dimension to recruitment is to help laity grow into and identify their own places and forms of ministry in and through the church or in their day-to-day world. A public announcement releasing a layman or laywoman from a church office in order to give full time and energy to an elected public office might encourage other laity to provide leadership in the community. Leadership skills that were developed in the Church and then used effectively in the trade union movement in England are a part of United Methodist heritage.

Lay leadership is a key element in a model of education for the local church. An aggressive and varied program of recruitment will need to be developed and implemented in order to involve more laity in positions of leadership.

Training. Furthermore, training will be an integral part of the recruitment process. It is almost immoral to ask a person to fulfill a task without providing adequate training. People who are motivated for ministry need to have help to understand the specific task, to develop skills, and to learn the art of interpersonal relationships. Without training, persons may experience failure and then feel guilty for not doing the task they accepted. But maybe even more important,

training for a task is a time of high motivation to learn; it is a key moment for education to take place.

There are at least three parts to training. First of all, there is the need for general orientation. Even long-time members need to think about the nature and function of the church or the purpose of evangelism or missions. The Training for Newly Elected Officers at First Church is an example of where general orientation took place.

Secondly, there is the need to focus on the specific tasks to be done. Time is needed to help leaders know the exact nature of the task and why it is to be done. The "why" may be as important as the "what." Douglas Johnson states, "Ministry must not be wasted on jobs that have little impact on the life and witness of the congregation or provide little learning or witness for the volunteer."³

Thirdly, there needs to be "on-the-job" assistance. Clergy or effective lay leaders can be available for follow-up and quickly relate to particular trouble spots that might appear. Indeed, on-the-job training may well be one of the best forms of education.

A crucial test of creative pastoral leadership is the ability to recruit and train laity to fulfill their calling to ministry. Recruitment and training is one way to move from theory of laity in ministry to the practice of laity in ministry.

³Douglas W. Johnson, The Care and Feeding of Volunteers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), p. 58.

The Planning Cycle

The classic planning cycle is a key element in a model of education for the local church. The planning cycle is an important way to help persons look at a task and break it down into smaller, more manageable components. It is an effective way to identify needs, plan a response to those needs, establish a schedule, identify necessary resources, secure ownership for the tasks to be accomplished, and encourage evaluation.

The use of the planning cycle is consistent with the theological understanding of the ministry of all Christians in that it enables persons other than the clergy to be an integral part of the process. There are many detailed descriptions of the planning cycle. An attractive and usable resource, "Planning for More Effective Ministry," was developed by the United Church of Canada.⁴

The planning cycle was used extensively in the Care and Share training experience and in the Leadership Development course. It was used to a lesser extent with "Journey In--Journey Out" and the Training for Newly Elected Officers.

Purpose. The first step in the planning process is to develop a statement of purpose or mission. This step provides an excellent opportunity to help a group struggle with the biblical and theological understanding of their task. The definition of purpose also helps a

⁴Douglas R. Conlan and J. Douglas Varey, "Planning for More Effective Ministry" (Don Mills, Ontario: Distribution Services).

group to understand the importance (or unimportance) of their specific ministry.

Assessment. The second step in the planning cycle is assessment. People have personal needs and they are aware of the needs of an institution. The assessment process is a way to identify those needs. The Council on Ministries of First Church, after seeking input from the congregation, established three program priorities based on identified needs: the church school with an emphasis on caring, leadership development, and adult growth opportunities. These program priorities served as the basis for the six case studies of this project. More specifically, the Adult Coordinating Committee made a careful assessment of needs in the area of adult growth before they decided to design the Care and Share experience. The Leadership Development course was in direct response to stated needs for leadership skills.

Goals. Once needs are assessed, a goal or series of goals is established. The goals will reflect the purpose of the groups and the needs, both personal and institutional, that were identified. The goals should be clearly stated, realistic, and attainable. Clearly stated goals will help a group know when they have achieved their stated objective. Mager, who has written some helpful material on goal analysis, suggests that one way to make fuzzy goals clearer is to apply the "Hey Dad Test."⁵ One is instructed to use the substance of a goal statement

⁵Robert F. Mager, Goal Analysis (Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, 1972), p. 29.

to finish the sentence: "Hey Dad, let me show you how I can _____!" If the results do not make sense, then the goal is too abstract. For example, if the goal is to help laity internalize the ministry of all Christians, the "Hey Dad" statement might read, "Hey Dad, let me show you how I can internalize the ministry of all Christians!" Doesn't that sound absurd? But what if the goal is to hold a coaching conference for the leaders of small groups? "Hey Dad, let me show you how I can train small group leaders!" That makes more sense. Mager has some further helpful suggestions on how to develop concrete goal statements. Effective goal statements can help to make educational experiences and tasks of ministry more focused and thus more successful.

Plan of Action. The next step is to develop a plan of action which becomes specific in terms of leadership, budget, time, and other requirements. Some helpful questions are: "How should we undertake the proposed course of action?" "Where should we do it?" "When should we do it?" "Who is to do it?" "How will we pay for it?" "How will we evaluate success or failure?"

Implementation. Implementation is a crucial step in the life of the church. All too often plans are made, but they are not put into action. To help make sure implementation occurs, there is the need to enlist the best people, provide them with adequate resources, establish clear responsibilities and lines of accountability, and keep the congregation informed regarding progress. Successful implementation is crucial if laity are expected to give of their time and energy. People need

to have successes or at least see some visible results because of their efforts.

Evaluation. Evaluation is another key step in the planning process, though it is often the most neglected. It serves two important functions. First of all, evaluation will give information regarding the present program in terms of whether or not goals are being reached. Unless evaluation is made, one cannot substantiate any claim that goals have been attained. Secondly, evaluation can provide new assessment information for future programs and ministry.

Evaluation can take place in the midst of the process by leaders and/or participants to either confirm that things are on track or to make mid-course corrections. This kind of evaluation was done in the coaching conferences of "Journey In--Journey Out" and resulted in less of an emphasis on the meditative process that had been suggested for use at each session. Evaluation after each session by both leaders and participants of the Care and Share training sessions was an integral part of the planning for the session that followed. Evaluation was also done after the completion of events, by both leaders and participants, to see if goals were reached. Mager suggests that this kind of evaluation is not to be concerned with "hair-splitting measurements," but with the discovery of positive or negative tendencies.⁶ It should be noted that evaluation will always be mutual by leaders and participants, if we affirm the ministry of all Christians!

⁶Robert F. Mager, Developing Attitude Toward Learning (Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, 1968), p. 70.

There are basically two kinds of evaluation. One kind is the evaluation of results or whether the event had an effect on the participants. One question that was asked the Adult Coordinating Committee members to check results was, "What did you learn or in what areas did you grow as a result of your involvement with the Committee?" (p. 80) A question addressed to the participants of "Journey In--Journey Out" to check on results was, "As a result of these small groups have you experienced any growth in your personal devotional life? If so, what?" (p. 121) Another kind of evaluation looks at the process or how well methods were used. One question addressed to the "Journey In--Journey Out" leaders was, "Did the printed workbook provide you with enough 'starter' material?" (p. 120) Those who attended the Leadership Development course were asked, "What recommendations for change in this course do you wish to express?" (p. 92)

Evaluation can provide invaluable feedback to leaders and to participants. All of the case studies of this report were evaluated by leaders and participants except for the sermon and some of the smaller committee training experiences. All of the evaluation techniques described above were used.

Creative Methods

A key element in any model of education is the methods used in the variety of settings and experiences. Methods used need to be consistent with both the theological understanding of the ministry of all persons and the components for an educational model. Basically,

that means there will be less emphasis upon "teacher-centered" processes and more emphasis upon mutuality between leader and participants. There will be group discussion and input using dyads and triads, role play, skill training and practice, lecture by both laity and clergy, careful use of outside resource persons, brainstorming, research and feedback, sharing, personal writing, reading assignments, question and answer, creative use of audio-visual materials and covenant making, to mention but a few of the methods that would be used.

Summary

Worship and preaching, biblical context, theological foundation, prayer, persistent life concerns and personal issues, community building, lay leadership, the planning cycle, and creative methods are all key elements of an educational model. These elements should be used in the variety of experiences in the local church, not in a faddish way, but because they are consistent with, arise from, or are supportive of the theological understanding of the ministry of all Christians.

Chapter 6

LEARNINGS

This project, "General Ministry: Designing an Educational Model for the Local Church," resulted in some new "learnings" for me, brought together in a more meaningful and focused manner previous understandings, and confirmed some previously held beliefs. These new insights and confirmations were naturally important for this project, but the most significant contributions are yet to come. In the years ahead, these "learnings," integrated into my understanding of ministry, will help me enable laity to fulfill their ministry. The "learnings" were gleaned from my own insights and evaluations, through the discipline of writing and reflecting, through the evaluations of the participants of the experiences described in the case studies, and from an overall evaluation by the Adult Coordinating Committee (p. 80).

Lay Involvement in Ministry

There is a variety of "learnings" that can be gathered together under the basic theme of this paper, which is lay involvement in ministry. These "learnings" include the variety of ways laity understand their calling, how they want to use their talents, and how training is so central to the practice of ministry.

Vocation. It became clear through the year and through conversations with laity that some people see ministry as work to be done in and through the church, if and when they have time, while others see ministry as a total life-style. One of the tasks of clergy is to help laity, the people of God, understand ministry as a calling or vocation and not simply as a task or tasks to be done.

Through this project there was an affirmation of what I had already suspected, that there are members of the local church who want to be more intentional about fulfilling their calling to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ. These persons experience the validity and power of the Christian faith for themselves, they are ready to help others, and to work for change where it is needed. There may be others who are too modest or too shy to make their interest in ministry known. Leaders need to be able to read subtle messages of interest or concerns in order to involve them. Despite many other community and family involvements, there are laity who are willing to give time and energy to something they feel is important and to something for which they will be trained. Members of the Laity Opportunity and Development (L.O.A.D.) Committee spent hours designing and then participating in the Leadership Development course. The Adult Coordinating Committee spent hours, many of them over early morning coffee, designing as well as leading the Care and Share training experiences. Why? Because most of the participants had an understanding of ministry as the vocation of all Christians, because they had an opportunity to decide what they wanted to do, and because they felt the task they had set for themselves was important.

It also became clearer through this project that many laity understand the broader implications of vocation. They want to be involved in ministry, but they are not willing to say that ministry can only be done in or even through the church. Their larger concept of laity in ministry extends beyond the walls of the building and beyond planned church programs to include being Christian in families, careers, and civic involvements. One of the reasons for the success of and the high level of attendance at the Leadership Development course was that the stated focus was on training for leadership, not only in the church, but in one's career or in community organizations. A number of people participated in the Care and Share training, but they did not want to participate in an ongoing group. Several people said, "I'm too busy for that." But they were aware of the many opportunities for caring within their normal routines of life. One of the participants probably spoke for several when she said, "I want to learn to 'Think Care.'"

The focus of this entire project, in its early stages, was to help laity carry on their ministry in more effective ways within the life of the Church, but it soon became clear that a major focus of a model for education should be to help laity be the Church in the world as well. Such an understanding of ministry, as was held by early Methodists where class leaders influenced trade unions, could have an astounding effect on our society so plagued with a multitude of problems.

Skills and Interests. A further insight that became clearer during this project was that laity want to use their innate skills, interests, and abilities in ministry. This does not mean that new

strengths and interests cannot be discovered and nurtured. Rather, people should not be expected to do and be something that does not fit with who they are. One of the crisis points in the Care and Share training came during the skills training session. Several persons indicated that they felt as if the leaders expected them to be "counselors." That possibility threatened them. It was emphasized that some members of the group, because of skills or interest, might well become significant helping persons in a crisis situation; but most caring would come by being a better listener, being present, or by doing a caring act. Most of the participants had those innate abilities.

To say that laity want to use their innate skills does not mean that people will want to use their career skills in the church. People need to vary their experiences. To do the same thing at the church that they do on their job could well become too boring. Teachers do not always need to teach Sunday School. Bankers do not always have to be treasurers. Laity have a variety of skills and interests that are not used in day-to-day life. They need to be encouraged to develop them.

Training. Training is clearly of basic importance in the task of enabling laity to be in ministry. In some workareas at First Church where no training was provided or the training was not done well, tasks were not accomplished, groups were not effective, and leaders did not have good feelings about their roles and leadership. Where preparation for leadership occurred, the evaluations clearly indicated that the

leaders felt good about the tasks accomplished, about the group, and about themselves as leaders.

The most important learning for me in the area of training was that persons who are called upon to serve as trainers received the best training. Members of the Adult Coordinating Committee and the small group leaders for "Journey In--Journey Out" served as trainers or leaders in other groups. When these people knew that the information and process would be used soon, they immersed themselves in study and preparation. Furthermore, there is great learning in doing. Finally, they received evaluation regarding their leadership. That is a learning experience!

Through this project, it became clearer to me than ever before that training must be an integral and ongoing part of a model of education for the ministry of all Christians. Training can be formal or informal. It can be in a group setting or one to one. It can be led by the pastor or effective laity. The important thing is that it takes place.

Different Levels of Commitment

One of the realities of the voluntary church that came into focus for me this past year is that members have different levels of commitment. The ideal understanding is that all Christians are called to be in ministry. The reality of the situation is that members of a congregation are at many different levels of commitment and involvement.

A large number of people are willing to give of some time, but they do not see themselves in ministry. If they are anything, they are simply "helpers" of the clergy. In the discussion of the ministry of all Christians with the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries, a large number of persons said very clearly and sometimes forcefully that they had certain expectations of the clergy in terms of leadership and function, while they understood their own role in a much more limited fashion. There is a larger number of marginal members who have the "spectator" image. They view the Christian faith as that which provides for their needs and comforts. To receive and not serve was their expectation when they became members of the church. It has served them well. They would be uncomfortable changing that understanding. There are some members of the church who simply have their names on the membership rolls. Finally, there are members, probably a rather small percentage, who see themselves as members of the Body of Christ and who want to fulfill his call to ministry.

How does one begin to respond effectively to those varying levels of commitment? The ideal understanding of the Church and the realities of the institutional church create a rather ambiguous situation for the clergy and for dedicated laity. Do we focus on the ideal, work for renewal, and face almost sure disappointment? Or do we focus on the realities of the volunteer church and assume that any efforts we make will not really change much of anything? I believe that the process described in this paper follows a middle way. More specifically,

there were several things done through this past year that might help to deal with the ambiguity between the ideal and the real church.

First of all, I discovered this past year that it is not only the pastor who struggles with ambiguity in ministry. There are many laity who are pained with and challenged by what they observe and experience among other less committed and involved laity. It becomes important to help the laity discuss and think about these varying levels of commitment.

Secondly, recruitment that is selective and not for the congregation as a whole has a greater possibility of engaging new persons in ministry or deepening a level of commitment than general invitations to be involved. Most participants in the Leadership Development course had been told about it through the nominating process or by specific recruitment by the L.O.A.D. Committee. Members of Care and Share and the Adult Coordinating Committee were contacted personally. These three groups were by far the most effective and involved new persons in leadership positions.

Thirdly, a recurring observation through all of these experiences is that people who have a voice in the decision-making process and are involved in the planning have an increased commitment to what is finally done.

The Adult Coordinating Committee seemed to have the highest level of commitment to the task and to decisions made. I was constantly amazed at the number of hours spent, the amount of energy expended, and the high level of skills shown on the part of people who had not

previously been that involved in leadership positions at First Church. I believe the commitment was there because the participants helped to develop and then agreed to a covenant (p. 81), made their own decisions regarding the program they would design and lead, and had a clear understanding of their goals.

The Care and Share personal commitments were not quite as effective. First of all, participants came into the experience with varying levels of interest. Some came because they wanted to be a part of the group, others came because they wanted to learn more about caring, and others came only because they had been invited. At the end of session five, persons were given the opportunity to make a commitment at one of four levels: be a member of a group, be a more caring person, be available for one-to-one sharing and caring, and be available for the pastor to call for specific caring. It occurs to me that the variety of choices for commitment decreased the effectiveness of covenant making. Secondly, the ongoing group has not effectively defined its goals. There is some wavering between providing learning experiences in the area of caring for a large number of members of the congregation and being a small covenant group. I am convinced that there would be more commitment to the group and to a caring ministry if participants made a covenant with one another to be a small Care and Share group.

Fourthly, First Church leadership has made the commitment to deal with the expectations of new members as they come to the life of the congregation. Since most of the leadership of the congregation has a commitment to the ministry of all Christians, that understanding of

church membership can be made clear to persons who come to join. As a result, some people decide not to join First Church. Others do join, but without making a full commitment to their calling. But most important, others become a part of the church with some excitement and anticipation to be in ministry.

Finally, to help deal with the difference between the ideal and the real in the ministry of all Christians, laity and clergy can continue to speak of, preach about, teach, study, model, and call for a commitment that affirms the ministry of all Christians. The experience of this past year has shown me that well-planned and well-led events, while not engaging the whole church in ministry, can help increase involvement and commitment of new persons to their vocation.

Pastor's Leadership Style

It was helpful to get some feedback regarding my leadership style. The information came through my own personal evaluation, evaluation by participants, and a more general evaluation by the Adult Coordinating Committee (p. 80).

While it was a joy to see three or four new persons assume strong leadership roles this past year and to grow through their experiences in terms of faith and understanding of ministry, one insight for me came at a feeling level. From time to time I felt twinges of threat as laity asserted themselves and assumed roles that I normally would have had. Hopefully, that was not only a learning but a growing experience for me.

By and large, my leadership style is perceived by others in much the same way as I understand it. The predominant style is shared and thus is supportive of the theological understanding of laity in ministry.

Education as a Focus for Ministry

One of the most important benefits of this project was that it helped to sharpen my priority and my commitment to a total educational approach using all of the dimensions of ministry as a way to enable laity to better understand and increase commitment to their calling. I do not mean to deprecate the importance of more formal teaching by the pastor. As a matter of fact, it became clearer to me that more formal classes in Bible and theology, led by the pastor, should be designed for adults as a regular part of the church program. The classes should be held, not simply because of the biblical and theological illiteracy that exists in the local church, but because where there is an effort to learn afresh what it means to be a disciple there seems to be renewed interest in the Church and its ministry.

There are many other settings for education that have already been alluded to in this paper such as administrative meetings, preaching, and the many situations of pastoral care. As a result of this project, I will be making a more conscious effort to use those opportunities for education. The one setting that I especially plan to use more is preaching. The sermon, when it is related to a Bible study or the topic of a small group, has a stronger impact on those participants

than upon other worshippers. Evaluations from some of those small group members said: "It was reinforcing." "I was more involved in the sermon." "It helped to hear my ideas responded to from the pulpit." The sermon, built on previous discussions and related to previous engagements with persons, became more dialogical in form and substance.

It is quite obvious that one cannot set out to change the "ethos" of a congregation by direct action. Yet one can create conditions for change by consciously working at the education process at a variety of levels, trusting that God's spirit will move in and through faithful efforts.

Education and Covenant Community

Through the experiences described in the case studies of this paper, I began to perceive that through education and training events people begin to develop a sense of covenant community. The evaluations used words like "trust," "honesty," and "openness" to describe the group experience.

The opposite is true as well. A sense of covenant community enabled education to take place. In the Adult Coordinating Committee, the coaching conference of "Journey In--Journey Out," and the Care and Share group, participants were given the opportunity to make a covenant with one another. There was a high level of commitment by those covenant makers through the whole process. The evaluations of these three experiences were consistently the most positive. The small groups of "Journey In--Journey Out," which were led by those I had coached, varied

in average attendance and the evaluations did not reflect as much learning and growth as the leader evaluations. A sense of community did not seem to develop in these groups. As a result, members of the group did not feel as open with one another.

The place where neither "community" nor "education" seemed effective was in the training of some of the workareas. My observation is that not enough time was given for group building. There was more content from the pastor. The focus was on tasks to accomplish and not on the needs, interests, and concerns of the participants. As a result there was fluctuation in attendance and effectiveness for some of the workareas during the year.

Effective education and covenant community seem to go together. Thus the church that wants to educate for ministry will plan for and emphasize the community of faith.

Community Enables Ministry

Another important insight relating to the covenant community that surfaced through the project was that people who sense they are a part of a caring and supportive group are enabled or encouraged to fulfill their ministry. The evaluations that participants of the Care and Share group continued to make were that their participation in the group made them more sensitive to opportunities for caring. Participants in "Journey In--Journey Out" took more seriously their ministry of intercession.

My conclusion is that members of groups need to spend time to become a cohesive and trusting fellowship. When honest and open feelings and concerns were shared, there was increased identity with the group, increased commitment to their task, and increased support for one another in ministry. Sometimes a group can become so task oriented that it bypasses the importance and possibility of building community. The most negative evaluation in the Care and Share group followed the session on skill training, where the session had been packed with lecture and skill practice. The most positive evaluation came from the final session when participants shared caring experiences from the previous three months, where they learned from one another, and where they prayed for one another.

It is important to work at the development of community. Persons in that kind of environment seem to gain courage from one another, learn from one another, and challenge one another.

Anxiety and Leadership Responsibilities

One by-product of the "ministry of all Christians" when it was put into practice was increased anxiety on the part of laity over the "rightness" of decisions and over the quality of their ministry. Where the pastor had been the authority and laity the helpers, the pastor was the one who was either given praise or criticism. Where the pastor was the one who carried on ministry because of his or her special training, the laity did not have to agonize over whether they were being helpful or harmful. One of the evaluations from the leader of a small group of

"Journey In--Journey Out" wrote, "I don't know if I did a good job." In another instance the Worship Workarea members and especially the chairperson agonized over their decision regarding the choice of new leadership for a newly restructured music department. It is important for pastoral leadership to be sensitive to those persons who feel anxious, enable them to reflect on the situation, provide support for leadership and decisions, and give them continued training where possible.

Saying Thank You

In addition to support, there is the need on the part of persons to receive appropriate awards. People involved in what they sense to be meaningful activities need to be thanked. It would be easy to say that since all people are called to ministry, we are to do our task and that is that. But it would be well for leadership in the church to recognize the need people have to know they have done something meaningful. That thank you might be done publicly, in the context of a group, as it was for the Adult Coordinating Committee members at the final session of the Care and Share training. It might be done through a thank-you note sent each year to the elected officers who are completing their terms, through a dinner for Commitment Plan persons, or through a Sunday morning recognition for Sunday School teachers, all of which were done at First United Methodist Church. I am learning that a "thank you" is a part of honest feedback to persons whose goals in leadership and ministry have been accomplished.

Informing the Congregation

I realized this past year that the congregation needs to be constantly informed on issues being discussed or on programs being planned. For example, the congregation has a right to know the understanding of ministry and the leadership style of the clergy. Members of a congregation will be in a state of confusion if they are expecting pastors to function in a "clergy-centered" style of leadership, but clergy use an enabling style of leadership. This particular issue had to be dealt with at least two or three times this past year at First Church. While it should not be expected that everyone agree to or fully understand a particular pastor's concept of ministry, it should at least be made and kept public. Dealing with the issue can be an educational experience in itself.

Secondly, the congregation needs to be informed about specific events even though an event is designed for a small group. The Care and Share group was formed by special invitation without much explanation to the congregation. It soon became apparent that questions were being raised and some suspicion existed within the congregation. Leadership of the group quickly decided to use the situation as an educational opportunity for the congregation and to invite others to be a part of the group if they so desired. A covenant community will have open lines of communication so there can be increased understanding regarding ministry and programming.

Concluding Remarks

The project described in this paper was not meant to be a programming concept. If so interpreted, it could be used as manipulation. It could become a way to use laity for preconceived ends rather than enabling laity to fulfill their vocation of ministry. Rather, this project was meant to be seen as a basic and growing theological understanding of ministry upon which one can build a model of education. This basic theological understanding and an emphasis on education throughout the total life of the congregation will continue to be my basic approach to ministry.

This commitment takes a considerable investment of time and energy. The results are varied. Through the model of education described in this paper, laity were enabled to fulfill their ministry and new persons were engaged in leadership roles for the first time. Some laity have grown and matured; others have remained virtually the same. There was increased commitment on the part of laity and clergy alike, while others seemed to have little understanding of or little growth in commitment. But there is no other way for me. If I understand the Scriptures clearly, enabling laity to be servants as the Body of Christ is the very heart of ministry.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PROCESS OF CONTRACTING FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
OF THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE

If a basic theological understanding is that laity and clergy are in ministry together, then the process of the laity and clergy working together should model that belief. Thus how this project was planned, how the local church experiences were designed, and how the program was implemented, become nearly as important as the experiences themselves.

First of all, the project was carried on within the context of three program priorities that had been established by the Council on Ministries (laity and clergy) for the year 1978:

1. the Church School, with special emphasis on caring.
2. adult education, with a special emphasis on small groups.
3. leadership development.

The second step was to contact the coordinator of Adult Ministries. A brief overview of the proposed project was shared, including my desire to work closely on the project with the Adult Coordinating Committee. He expressed a high level of interest.

Since the coordinator was the only elected member on the committee, the next step was to contact several persons who had, at one time or another, expressed an interest in adult education.

At the first meeting an overview of the project was presented. It was emphasized that this would be a group that would assess needs,

design, and carry out a program. They would not simply be a rubber stamp for a program planned by the pastor. A contract was established (see p. 81). Each member of the group was given the opportunity to say "yes" or "no" to the contract and their involvement. Seven wanted to be involved in the project while one did not.

The group met an average of once a month from October, 1977, through June, 1978. The first session focused on the theology of the laity. The basic resource was the statement of "The Ministry of All Christians" from The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. During the next two sessions we discussed the implications of that statement for ministry and for adult education. The next step was to discover what was already being done or planned in the church. Laity Opportunity and Development (L.O.A.D.) was planning to design and carry out a Leadership Development Course (see Appendix B). The pastors were planning a program to train newly elected officers for their tasks (see Appendix C). The Worship Workarea expressed an interest in designing an educational and spiritual small group experience in the area of personal and corporate worship (see Appendix D).

The Committee, after assessing what was being done, decided that there was still a need to enable persons to be involved in a direct ministry of caring. The Committee then designed, led, and evaluated a five-session program called Care and Share (see Appendix E).

The members of the Adult Coordinating Committee were also asked to make a general evaluation of the work of the Committee, the general impact of all of the experiences, and my leadership style.

ADULT COORDINATING COMMITTEE EVALUATION

1. How well did we fulfill our contract with one another?
(See attached copy of the contract.)

0	5	10
Not at all		Perfectly

Additional comments:

2. How effective have we been in helping members understand "The Ministry of All Christians?"

0	5	10
Not at all		Very effective

Additional comments:

3. How effective have we been in equipping members for their ministry in the church, through the church, and in their day-to-day routines?

4. What did you learn or in what areas did you grow as a result of your involvement in the Adult Coordinating Committee?

5. What still needs to be done to enable members of First United Methodist Church to be in ministry in the church, through the church, and in their day-to-day routines?

6. How would you rate Duane's leadership style?

<u>Autocratic</u>			<u>Democratic</u>
Tells	Sells	Tests	Consults
			Joins

Additional comments:

Contract between DUANE A. EWERS and the ADULT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
First United Methodist Church, Fargo, North Dakota
for the Professional Project in the Doctor of Ministry Program

<u>MY NEEDS</u>	<u>YOUR NEEDS</u>	<u>CONTRACT</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I need a group to help assess needs and design a program of adult education at First United Methodist Church for my Doctor of Ministry Professional Project.2. I need a group to help in reflection on two major parts of my paper:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. the general ministry of all Christians,b. the educational implications that arise out of that general ministry.3. I need a group to help coordinate the educational program, secure leadership and resources.4. I need a group to help evaluate at the end of the nine months.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The personal need to learn while at the same time facilitating groups.2. Adult education is needed in the life of the Church. This practical application can become a model for this church as well as for others.3. We need to respond to the increased interest in adult education.4. There is a void in the lives of some adults who experienced adult education in the late 1950's and early 1960's.5. We need to help people involved in leadership positions to understand their responsibility.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We agree to have at least one meeting a month for the next nine months. The first meeting dates will be: October 23, 1977 --2:00 p.m. November 20, 1977--2:00 p.m. January 8, 1978 --2:00 p.m.2. We will attend meetings as regularly as possible, with Duane making adequate preparation to facilitate the meetings.3. We will prepare ourselves for the meeting when there is material to read and prepare.

APPENDIX B

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE

The Laity Opportunity and Development Committee (L.O.A.D.), in light of the priority for leadership development established by the Council on Ministries, designed and either provided or secured leadership for the Leadership Development Course. One of the pastors on staff began each session with a brief Bible study based on Nehemiah. The course consisted of four 2-hour sessions. Twenty-four persons registered at a cost of \$5.00 each. Attendance at the sessions averaged twenty-two.

It is important to note that the purpose of the course was not only to help persons become more effective leaders in the church, but to help them with leadership skills in every dimension of life.

The Course Purpose

It is the purpose of this leadership course to provide each participant with the basic information of how to be organized and efficient in their home, work, church and community activities.

The Course Goals

It is the goals of this leadership course to:

1. develop and practice the basic skills of management (planning, organizing and follow through).

2. identify and develop each participant's leadership style.
3. identify a group's personality and the leader's relationship to that group.
4. practice the skills of communications, motivation, decision making and time management.

SESSION I

THE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Week 1--Outline--Two Hours

- A. Brief Bible Study (10 minutes)
- B. Introduction to the course and this session (10 minutes) led by a member of the congregation
- C. The Management Cycle (50 minutes)
 - 1. Planning
 - a. Who are we and why do we exist? (Purpose)
 - b. What do we need to do? (Goals)
 - c. How can we do what needs to be done? What are alternatives and resources?
 - d. Choose the best alternative and communicate it.
 - 2. Organizing
 - a. Who is going to be responsible for what? (Delegation)
Let people choose on the basis of their interests or talents.
 - b. Assign responsibilities. Eliminate overlapping. Check for understanding.
 - c. How are the assignments going to be carried out? (Objectives, steps, priorities)
 - d. When are we going to carry out assignments? (Scheduling)
What is the starting time, duration, and ending time for steps, objectives, goals, expenditure of resources?
 - 3. Following Through (Implementation)
 - a. How are we doing compared to our plan? (Control)
Feedback on a periodic basis.
 - b. What corrections can we make?
 - c. What have we learned? (Review, evaluation)
- D. Break Time (10 minutes)
- E. Practical Exercises in the Management Cycle (35 minutes)
- F. Summary and Closure (5 minutes)

SESSION II

LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

Week 2--Outline--Two Hours

- A. Brief Bible Study (10 minutes)
- B. Review of the last session and introduction to this session by the L.O.A.D. Committee chairperson (10 minutes)
- C. Leaders and Followers--led by an outside resource person
 - 1. The Leader (40 minutes)
 - a. Leadership styles
 - Autocratic--often used in industry and in church.
Decisions are made at the top and sent down.
People are often not motivated.
 - Democratic--growing use in management.
Emphasis is upon participation.
It seems to provide more incentive.
 - b. Theory X--most people have a dislike for work and will avoid it when they can. They have to be coerced and wish direction.
Theory Y--people feel that physical and mental work is as natural as play. They have self-control and will work towards goals to which they are committed.
 - c. Evaluation of participants' leadership style (see pp. 86-87)

Break Time (10 minutes)

- 2. The Followers (40 minutes)
 - a. Group composition.
 - b. Formal groups--usually have their own lines of authority.
 - c. Informal groups--members feel welcome, communicate easily, resistance to change, conformity.
 - d. Other group dynamics.
 - e. Identifying and relating to group leaders.
 - f. Practical exercises in group dynamics. There are a variety of printed exercises available.

- D. Summary (10 minutes)

Name _____

SELF EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP STYLE

Circle the one style (A, B, C, D, E) which best describes you under each of the six Factors.

FACTOR 1: DECISIONS

- A I accept decisions of others
- B I place high value on maintaining good relations
- C I search for workable, even though not perfect, decisions
- D I place high value on making decisions that stick
- E I place high value on getting sound creative decisions that result in understanding and agreement

FACTOR 2: CONVICTIONS

- A When ideas, opinions, or attitudes different from my own appear, I initiate middle ground positions
- B I go along with opinions, attitudes and ideas of others or avoid taking sides
- C I listen for and seek out ideas, opinions and attitudes different from my own
- D I prefer to accept opinions, attitudes and ideas of others rather than to push my own
- E I stand up for my ideas, opinions and attitudes even though it sometimes results in stepping on toes

FACTOR 3: CONFLICT

- A When conflict arises, I try to identify reasons for it and to resolve underlying causes
- B When conflict arises, I try to cut it off or to win my position
- C When conflict arises, I try to be fair but firm and to get an equitable solution
- D I try to avoid generating conflict, but when it does appear, I try to soothe feelings and to keep people together
- E When conflict arises, I try to remain neutral or stay out of it

FACTOR 4: EMOTIONS (TEMPER)

- A Under tension, I feel unsure which way to turn or shift to avoid further pressure
- B By remaining neutral, I rarely get stirred up
- C When things are not going right, I defend, resist or come back with counter-arguments
- D When aroused, I contain myself, though my impatience is visible
- E Because of the disturbance tensions can produce, I react in a warm and friendly way

FACTOR 5: HUMOR

- A My humor sells myself or a position
- B My humor is hard hitting
- C My humor fits the situation and gives perspective; I retain a sense of humor even under pressure
- D My humor is seen by others as rather pointless
- E My humor aims at maintaining friendly relations, or when strains do arise, it shifts attention away from the serious side

FACTOR 6: EFFORT

- A I exert vigorous effort and others join in
- B I seek to maintain a good steady pace
- C I drive myself and others
- D I rarely lead but extend help
- E I put out enough effort to get by

SESSION III

LEADER-GROUP RELATIONS

Week 3--Outline--Two Hours

- A. Brief Bible Study (10 minutes)
- B. Review of the previous sessions and introduction of this session by the L.O.A.D. Committee chairperson (10 minutes)
- C. Leader-Group Relations--led by an outside resource person
 - 1. Discussions and practical exercises (40 minutes)
 - a. Communication skills
 - introductions
 - how to state a purpose, goal, objective
 - paraphrasing
 - summarizing
 - brainstorming
 - active listening
 - problem identification
 - small group organization
 - telephone mechanics
 - memo writing
 - b. Small group organization

Break Time (10 minutes)

- 2. Discussions and practical exercises (40 minutes)
 - a. Motivation
 - self-motivation
 - rewards
 - risks
 - praise
 - b. Decision making
 - c. Time management
- D. Summary (10 minutes)

SESSION IV

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Week 4--Outline--Two Hours

- A. Brief Bible Study (10 minutes)
- B. Review of previous sessions (45 minutes). Leadership shared by a pastor and a layman.
 - 1. Review the sessions in small groups.
 - Each group record all insights and learnings gained from the session. Each person record at least three as a starting point.
 - Data to be collected and put on summary sheet to be sent to participants later.
 - 2. Individual persons will list all of the expectations he/she had of the course that were met.
Individual persons will list all of the expectations that were not met.
In groups of three those lists are to be shared which in turn are to be shared with total group.
Groupings of met and unmet expectations should be noted.

Break Time (10 minutes)

- C. Working with problem areas in leadership role (45 minutes)
 - 1. Each person will be encouraged to reflect on the times during the previous weeks when learnings were applied in any leadership role.
 - How did the ideas you tried work out?
 - What were some problems encountered?
 - How did you handle them?
 - 2. These learnings/reflections are to be shared with the total group. It is important to emphasize that some of the best learning happens by sharing successes and failures.
 - 3. Session leaders to keep track of major problems raised and to check with the group to see if there is any recommendation for future programs.
- D. Closing and Evaluation, see pp. 90-92. (10 minutes)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE

EVALUATION FORM

Self Rating Before Course	Item	After the Course		Level of Success I Have Experienced
		I Understand the Item Now	Yes	
1-2-3-4-5	Needs Assessment		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Goal Setting		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Resource Determination		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	People Involvement		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Responsibilities		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Documentation		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Project--Program Scope		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Group Structuring		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Objective Setting		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Priorities		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Scheduling		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Coordination		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Delegation		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Recruiting		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Policies--Rules		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Appraisal Systems		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Developing Standards		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Your Leadership Style		Yes	No
1-2-3-4-5	Other Leadership Styles		Yes	No

(continued)

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE
EVALUATION FORM
(continued)**

Self Rating Before Course	Item	After the Course		Level of Success I Have Experienced
		I Understand the Item Now	Yes No	
1-2-3-4-5	Group Composition	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Group Divisions	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Introductions	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Paraphrasing--Feedback	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Summarizing	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Memo Writing	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Small Group Organizing	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Problem Identification	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Brainstorming	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Active Listening	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Self Motivation	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Rewards	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Risks	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Praise	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Decision Making	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5
1-2-3-4-5	Time Management	Yes	No	1-2-3-4-5

Which of the items on the other part of this evaluation sheet do you use most frequently?

What recommendations for changes in this course do you wish to express?

What suggestions do you have for the development of additional courses?

Thank you for your frank and open expressions. It was our pleasure to share the L.O.A.D. (Laity Opportunity and Development) experience with you!

APPENDIX C

TRAINING FOR NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS

Because of the importance of training persons for the offices to which they have been elected, the Committee on Nominations and Personnel urged the pastors to provide training for persons serving on the major committees of the church. When persons were contacted regarding their interest in a position, they were informed that training would be available.

The goals of the training were: (1) to encourage new committee members to think about "The Ministry of All Christians" and its implications for them as a leader in the church, and (2) to help members of each group understand the specific task of their committee.

The procedure for the training of the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries was to, first of all, mail to each member a notification of the meeting, the agenda, and a copy of the statement "The Ministry of All Christians."

The session:

7:31 p.m.--Brief devotions

7:35 p.m.--Introductions

7:40 p.m.--Three small groups were formed to discuss the question, "How do you understand the function of the laity and clergy in ministry?" Ideas were recorded on newsprint.

7:50 p.m.--Each group shared their insights with the total group.

8:00 p.m.--With the total group input in mind, the three groups discussed a second question, "Are these understandings realistic for First United Methodist Church? Why? Why not?

8:10 p.m.--Each group shared their insights with the total group.

8:20 p.m.--The three groups then discussed a third question, "What helps or hinders us in fulfilling these functions in our congregation?" Responses were recorded on newsprint.

8:30 p.m.--Insights were then shared and made a permanent part of the record as possible areas for future work.

8:40 p.m.--Brief lecture regarding the specific role of the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries.

8:50 p.m.--Any pressing business.

The procedure for the workareas was to, first of all, mail each member a notification of the meeting, a copy of the statement "The Ministry of All Christians," a recent sermon or article that related to the task of the workarea, and a description of that task as described in The Discipline.

The session:

7:30 p.m.--Informal introductions

7:40 p.m.--Questions, concerns, and issues that participants
have as they come to the task.

7:50 p.m.--Brief discussion of theological and biblical basis
for the task.

8:05 p.m.--Discussion of specific responsibilities and programs
at First United Methodist Church, including the
statement of purpose of the congregation and the
program priorities of the Council on Ministries.

8:20 p.m.--Questions and discussion for understanding and
clarification.

8:30 p.m.--Closing prayer.

APPENDIX D

LENTEN SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

"JOURNEY IN--JOURNEY OUT"
An Experience of Prayer and Worship Renewal

The Worship Workarea of First United Methodist Church believed that a need existed for a better understanding and a richer experience of both personal and corporate worship. I shared with them some of the resources that I discovered as a result of a course on worship renewal at the School of Theology, Claremont, California. With that material as a basic resource, the workarea developed the following Lenten experience.

During the two Sunday worship services prior to Lent and in one church newsletter, members were informed of the proposed program and invited to participate at one of three levels: as a leader of a small group, as a host/hostess for a small group, or as a participant. They were informed that the leaders would be trained by participating in an actual small group experience led by Pastor Ewers, by being provided with adequate resource materials, and by the pastor being available for any other "coaching" they might desire.

As a result, seven persons agreed to be leaders. Seven small groups with an average of eight persons per group were then formed. Each group met at a time most convenient to the group members. Participants were urged to follow the theme of the week and to use the printed

resources as a pattern for their daily prayer life following each session.

In addition to the small groups, the Sunday worship, following the experience of the small group, focused on the same theme with the emphasis on the corporate life of the church. The sermon on Sunday was on the same theme as well so small group participants had done some thinking and made some preparation prior to the worship service (see pp. 115-119).

The material that follows was the basic resource for the small groups. It draws largely from a School of Theology, Claremont, Calif., course led by DeWane Zimmerman and to a lesser degree from The Workbook of Living Prayer by Maxie Dunnam. The six session themes were:

- "The Journey In"
- "Affirming the Source of My Life"
- "Celebrating the Good News"
- "Getting Rid of the Garbage and Reclaiming the Gift"
- "Enlarging the Circle"
- "The Journey Out"

The process used in the small group experience was basically the same each time. There was a brief opening prayer after greeting one another. The leader then elaborated on the theme of the day as printed in the material. There was then a time of solitude as each person did some personal reflecting. Participants were given time to do the suggested writing. They were then invited to share at whatever level they themselves chose. In closing, individuals were invited to pray for themselves and others.

There were three levels of evaluation. First of all, evaluation was an integral part of each coaching conference. Those who volunteered

to be leaders were given the opportunity to share how their group went, what seemed to be helpful and what was not of much value. Secondly, the leaders were given the opportunity to make a written evaluation of the whole process at the final coaching conference (see p. 120). Thirdly, small group participants were asked to make a written evaluation of the small group experience and the impact it made in the area of personal growth and the corporate worship experience (see p. 121).

AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY

When I do not take time to get in touch with the CENTER of life, I feel shallow and at odds with myself. I create a hectic atmosphere around me to match the restlessness inside. I cannot be creative with the conflicts on the outside unless I deal with the conflicts on the inside.

*"O God, you are my God,
And I long for you.
My whole being desires you,
Like a dry, worn-out, and
waterless land,
My soul is thirsty for you."*

' Psalm 63:1 (TEV)

AUGUSTINE: "Thou hast made us for THYSELF, O GOD, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

FRITZ PERLS: "Without a center, everything goes on in the periphery and there is no place from which to work, from which to cope with the world . . . this achieving the center, being grounded in one's self, is about the highest state a human being can achieve."

CENTERING IS:

- Seeking to be intentional about getting in touch with what is going on inside of us.
- Focusing on the Source "in whom we live and move and have our being."
- Discovering that love, and life itself, comes as a gift not as a reward.

"Centering calls for a receptive mindstyle. If centering is to be a creative experience one of the major mood changes we must make is to shift from aggressively trying to "force" something to happen to being willing to "let" something happen.

"JOURNEY IN"

"To find a place to Center is not a luxury but a strategy for survival"

*O God, you are my God,
and I long for you.
My whole being desires you;
like a dry, worn-out, and
waterless land,
My soul is thirsty for you.
Psalm 63:1*

Increasingly I find it necessary to declare a Sabbath each day; a time apart from the activity of the spirit and body, apart from work or intercessory concern, a time for my mind to be at rest, to contemplate all that is within that day and say over it all, "It is good." It is a time to lift away the layers of necessities and dwell in pure unbounded praise . . . a friend of mine once described this process as "clearing out the cobwebs of the mind."

Douglas V. Steere:

"O Lord, you are always ready
But Am I ever ready?
O Lord, make me ready
or at least make me more
ready to be made ready."

ONE WAY OF BECOMING RECEPTIVE

There are many ways of becoming "receptive." Each person discovers his or her own way. How do you get in touch with the quietness within you? How do you enable yourself to be receptive to the "sighs too deep for words"? What way have you found to respond to the invitation to "Be still and know . . ."? Here is one way. It is simple, but "it's a gift to be simple"!

1. Find some space. A place where you can affirm your solitude, a place where there is quietness if possible.
2. Get comfortable. Stretch your body; relax. If sitting on a chair, sit erect; if sitting on the floor, it may be comfortable to sit with legs crossed. Some find it helpful to have their hands resting in their lap, palms up receptively. A comfortable "naturalness" is the key.
3. Check time. Decide how long you will remain in this position and place: 10, 15, 20 minutes? Many have found 20 minutes comfortable.
4. Close eyes. Don't be anxious as thoughts cross the 'screen' of your mind. Gently dismiss them as you can.
5. Breathe deeply. Become very aware of your breathing. Breathing is a sacramental link between ourselves and all of life. The words "breathe" and "spirit" are often interchangeable in the Bible.
6. Concentrate on breathing. Do not worry about what is happening, or if "anything" is happening. Thoughts will come; let them come, let them go. Concentrating on your rhythmic breathing will tend to diminish other distractions. Be receptive.
7. Check clock for time limit. If more time remains, close eyes; return to concentration on breathing and the quietness.
8. Closing. When you sense that the time you have set has been reached, before opening your eyes you might want to softly say:

"For all that has been--Thanks!
To all that shall be--Yes!"

DISCOVERIES:

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O God,
from whom I ask so much
and in my heart expect so little:
remind me that most of what I need
you have already given.
Teach me to be receptive. Amen.
--DeWane Zimmerman

AFFIRMATION--AFFIRMING THE SOURCE OF MY LIFE

CENTERING: I now center my awareness on the Source of my life, remembering that it is "in God I live and move and have all my being."

The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God.
 That depth is what the word God means.
 And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation.

--Paul Tillich

Where could I go to escape from your Spirit?
 Where could I get away from your presence?
 If I went to heaven, you would be there;
 if I lay down in the world of the dead,
 you would be there.
 If I flew away beyond the east,
 or lived in the farthest place in the west,
 you would be there to lead me,
 you would be there to help me.

Psalm 139:7-12

Come, let us bow down and worship Him;
 Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker;
 He is our God;
 we are the people he cares for,
 the flock for which he provides.

Psalm 95:6-7

At this point in my life, what is it I mean when I use the word "God"? What do I "center" on when I seek to center my awareness on as much of "me" as I now know on what I now mean when I use the word "God"?

DISCOVERIES:

MY PERSONAL UNDERSTANDINGS:

INSIGHTS FROM OTHERS:

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Your closing Prayer:

FOCUSING--CELEBRATING THE GOOD NEWS

CENTERING: I now take the third step to focus on the Spirit of God as revealed in the life of Jesus. We do not simply affirm God, but we try to understand what kind of God.

John Powell: "In the process of faith our greatest need is constantly to revise our concept of God who is always infinitely greater and more loving than our finite minds can possibly grasp."

J. B. Phillips: "We can never have too big a concept of God . . . yet, unless we are to remain befogged and bewildered and give up all hope of ever knowing God as a Person, we have to accept God's own focusing . . . in a human being, Jesus Christ."

W. H. Auden: "Remembering the stable where for once in our lives everything became a You and nothing was an It."

*O Lord, I will always
sing of your constant love.
I will proclaim your
faithfulness forever.
I know that your love
will last for all time,
that your faithfulness is
as permanent as the sky.*

Psalm 89:1-2

*"And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth."*

John 1:14

Frederick Bueckner: "A crucial eccentricity of the Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace. There is nothing you have to do. There is nothing you have to do. There is nothing you have to do."

The grace of God means something like this: here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe."

"In the face of all this,
 What is there left to say?
 If God is for us, who can
 be against us?"

Romans 8:31

In this moment of my meditation I center myself not on what I feel I lack, but on the many graces of life God has already given me and even now is giving.

DISCOVERIES

Do you know yourself accepted as you are, rather than on the basis of actions you do or masks you wear?

Name three persons who accept you as you really are. How do you feel about them?

Recall two specific instances when you felt or believed God's grace was operating in your life.

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O God, who has brought us to life;
 so often we come to you asking to
 have some of our needs met;
 so seldom do we come to you with
 thanksgiving for what you have
 already given!

Make us sensitive to the many gifts
 you have already given:

UNLOADING--GETTING RID OF THE GARBAGESTEP FOUR

CENTERING: Centered in the awareness of grace, accepted just as I am, I am free, in child-like gratitude, to unload the garbage.

Fritz Perls: "In and out of the garbage pail
Put I my creation,
Be it lively, be it stale,
Sadness or elation

Joy and sorrow as I had
Will be re-inspected;
Feeling sane and being mad,
Taken or rejected."

John B. Magee: "We begin confession with a full and honest expression of feeling in the presence of God. All our rage, hate, fear, can be poured out without censorship and unchecked by guilts, rationalizations, or fears. We must be what we are before the reality which supremely Is. We must not judge ourselves or think of God as judge, for this would hinder self-revelation and our chance to move beyond. Feelings, not concepts, are the clue to our inner life."

Henri J. M. Nouwen: ". . . to forget our sins may be an even greater sin than to commit them. Why? Because what is forgotten cannot be healed and that which cannot be healed easily becomes the cause of greater evil."

Anthony Quinn: "That night I went to the theater; my voice was gone. I couldn't speak above a whisper. We sent for a doctor. He hurried to the theater and examined my throat. He said there was nothing physically wrong.

'I don't know,' he said. 'Either you have a growth on your cords, which I can't see, or you have a lie caught in your throat.'

A lie caught in my throat! There were a thousand lies caught in my throat! Which was the one that was crippling me?"

"For I am well aware of my faults,
I have my sin constantly in mind,
having sinned against none other than you,
having done what you regard as wrong."

Psalm 51--Jerusalem Bible

"From the depths of my despair
I call to you, Lord.
Hear my cry, O Lord, listen
to my call for help.
If you kept a record of our
sins, who could escape being
condemned?"

Psalm 130:1-3

Sin is not only what we do, it is often what we think and are. It is our separation from God, our failure to live in obedient relationship to him. Sometimes we feel like a "lump of sin," not because of what we have done so much as our inner-being is out-of-joint, out of relationship with God. We don't feel any oneness. Our lives are fragments, out of focus.

DISCOVERIES: Today, O God, here is where I feel "out-of-joint."

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Write your own prayer of confession here:

FORGIVENESS--RECLAIMING THE GIFT

STEP FIVE

CENTERING--I remember that, in spite of the pain of the past, God does not call me to park by my failures but to reclaim the gift of grace and to know that the future is open.

Alan Paton: "I should like to write a few words for those who have repented, and who have been forgiven (whether in private or public confession, or by the person whom they have harmed) but who still cannot feel forgiven."

You are . . . not understanding the Gospel. You are not understanding the injunction of Jesus to you that you not forgive . . . seven times, but seventy times seven. If you are expected to do that, what do you think God may be expected to do?

What is more, you are making it difficult . . . for God to use you as an instrument, because your feeling of guilt for something that has been forgiven."

Paul Tillich: "But sometimes it happens that we receive the power to say 'Yes' to ourselves, that peace enters into us and makes us whole, that self-hate and self-contempt disappear and that our self is reunited with itself. Then we can say that grace has come upon us."

Jesus Christ was not Yes and No;
but in him it is always Yes.
For all of the promises of God
find their Yes in him.

II Corinthians 1:19-20

Yet, though sin is shown to
be wide and deep, thank God . . .
grace is wider and deeper still!

Romans 5:20

The fact that I am a sinner does not keep God from loving me. Communion with God does not depend upon my being without sin. On the contrary, it is dependent upon my acknowledging myself as a sinner, accepting that fact within myself, and believing with all my heart that Jesus loves me just as I am, and that his love cleanses me.

When I believe this, I feel clean, and I can enter into communion with God.

DISCOVERIES: Complete the prayer that you wrote in step four (confession) by sharing with God exactly how you feel about accepting his forgiveness and love.

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O God, who has given me grace I seldom claim
and strength I often fail to affirm:
let this be a moment of new beginnings.
O Lord, I know I brood too much over my failures
and hold too long to my remorse.

Remind me, O God who keeps no score of failure,
that your will for me
is not that I give up but that I keep growing.
Resensitize me to your hope for my life
lest measuring myself by the worst I have done
I fail to believe in what you know I can become.

O God, who is within me to save me,
helping me to make peace with the past:
help me once again to accept your grace,
to receive as well as to give it,
and gratefully to begin again.

--DeWane Zimmerman

INTERCESSION--ENLARGING THE CIRCLESTEP SIX

CENTERING: Having centered myself in the Source of my life and celebrated the good news of the continuous gift of grace, I have a hunger for relatedness, for enlarging the circle of my concern, for experiences and expressions of healing and reconciliation. It is not enough just to center. To accept the gift of grace is to commit oneself to an inclusive, not exclusive, lifestyle.

Hugh Prather: "In your struggle to be real, to be centered, to be you, have you left a place for me?"

Louis Evelyn: "Prayer is opening ourselves to God so that God can open us to others."

Evelyn Underhill: "We are far from realizing all that human spirits can do for one another on spiritual levels if they will pay the price; how truly and really our souls interpenetrate, and how impossible it is to keep ourselves to ourselves."

DeWane Zimmerman: "When we lift up the life of another person before God, when we pray for another person's release from despair, for healing of someone's pain or hurt, for another to throw off a destructive habit, for the restoration of a broken relationship, for someone's courage to continue in a hard struggle, only then do the walls that separate us go down and we sense that we are in reality bound together in one inclusive and intimate family."

"Some wandered in desert wastes . . .
 hungry and thirsty
 their souls fainted within them.
 . . . they are diminished and brought low
 through oppression, trouble, and sorrow . . .
 But God raises up the needy out of
 affliction." Psalm 107

"If one member suffers,
all suffer together
If one member is honored,
all rejoice together."
I Corinthians 12:26

DISCOVERIES

Is there a person, or persons, or situation, about whom or about which you are deeply concerned today? Deeply concerned? You might want to name two or three:

Could these persons or situations become part of your intercessory prayer list for the week ahead? Would you be willing to make a commitment to pray for these each day this next week?

Have you ever prayed for someone or some situation, and were led to do something yourself in response? Could you name one or two situations? What were you led to do?

Many people have had meaningful experiences of being prayed for. If you have, describe that experience. Possibly you will want to share it with the group.

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Today, O God, I especially pray for:

BEGINNINGS: THE JOURNEY OUTSTEP SEVEN

CENTERING: I have centered my awareness on the Source of my life: the miracle and mystery of my existence. I have celebrated the good news that I am loved, understood, forgiven, accepted. I have sought to enlarge the circle of my awareness and love, to be more inclusive in spirit, being, and doing.

Now in this seventh step I remind myself that "prayer" or "centering" is not fulfillment, but preparation, a beginning, a starting place.

I do not want to commit the arrogance of attempting to be more "spiritual" than God. When I say I believe in the "incarnation" I am professing the Biblical witness that God's love does not remain "spiritual," but the Word becomes flesh--a human being--and touches my life. God loves me through a Person. And I love God through persons.

To ask, "What is God's will for me at this time in my life?" is to ask two questions: What are the gifts I have been given? How can I use them at this time in my life?

Elizabeth O'Connor: A primary purpose of the Church is to help us discover our gifts and, in the face of our fears, to hold us accountable for them so that we can enter into the joy of creating . . . When I become aware of my own gifts and give my attention to communicating what is in me--my own truth, as it were--I have experience of growing toward wholeness.

Sam Keen: Be recreated as an agent rather than a victim.

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone."

I Corinthians 12:4-7

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them."

Romans 12:6

DISCOVERIES:

What are my gifts?

In my wildest dreams, how would I like to use them?

Why am I not?

What one thing can I do today?

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O God, lest the gift of this day
and my spirit within be joyless,
I turn hungrily to you:
to widen my awareness,
to re-sensitize my responses,
and to keep alive within me
the gifts you have given.

Remind me, O Lord of my life,
that I'll never have more time
for loving, caring, giving,
than I have right now.

And grant me, O saving God,
eyes that look
until I see,
a spirit that seeks
until I find,
and a song within me
that keeps on singing.

--DeWane Zimmerman

CENTERING EACH DAY

With these 7 steps--and the purpose and meaning for each step--the experience of centering can be a very personal resource for each day. One can go through the experience in a few minutes--or one can devote a regular time each morning or evening in order to have a more intensive experience.

In going through the 7 steps of this centering experience, we have rehearsed the good news of the Gospel and are freed to celebrate the living and doing of the day.

1. INSCAPE: The journey in

I center on the quiet within, in order to be receptive.

2. AFFIRMATION: Affirm the Source of my life

I center on the affirmation that in "God I live, and move, and have my being."

3. FOCUSING: Celebrating the Good News

I center on the good news that through the grace of God I am loved and accepted.

4. UNLOADING: Getting rid of the garbage

I center myself on the awareness that since I am loved, I need not be afraid to confess that which is hurting within me.

5. FORGIVENESS: Reclaiming the gift

I center my awareness that there is nothing I can confess that will separate me from the love of God.

6. INTERCESSION: Enlarging the circle

Loved, understood, forgiven, and accepted, I am freed to center myself on the hurts and needs of others, enlarging the circle of concern.

7. BEGINNINGS: The journey out

In this last step I remind myself that "prayer" or "centering" is not fulfillment, but preparation, encouragement, a beginning, a starting place. What one thing am I freed to do today?

"JOURNEY IN"
Duane A. Ewers, Preaching
February 12, 1978

Psalm 63:1-8

INTRODUCTION

We live in a time of stress and anxiety. That is not simply a general observation we make about life. We know about it from experience. Dr. Ken Mitchell, speaking at the opening convocation of the Communiversity at Concordia College last Sunday, pointed to major stress times in our lives: the birth of a baby, a child going off to school, adolescence (a time of stress for both parents and youth), choice of marriage or career, the end of one's career, and the death of a family member. He further suggested that any one of these events or a combination of them can even cause physical illness in our lives. I understand that a medical rule of thumb is that among patients who visit a general practitioner on any given day, half of them will complain of symptoms stemming from anxiety and stress, if not as a result of these major stress times I have just mentioned, then from the build-up of stress in the day-to-day routine of life. There comes a time, in many of our lives, when we experience stress so acutely that we are unable to cope creatively with life. Even minor happenings become a crisis: a deadline to meet, an interview to hold, or an appointment with the dentist. When events begin to push in on us, we begin to feel as if we are victims. We are persons in a game over which we have no control. Our inner resources are gone and we simply cannot cope with life.

It is then that we sense one like the Psalmist is in touch with our feelings. Listen to his imagery: "God, I long for you. My whole being desires you; like a dry, worn-out and waterless land, my soul is thirsty for you." Can you identify with that? One of the strong points of the Psalms is that they touch base with the human condition. Here is one who has known the depths of despair as we so often do. Here is one whose own resources are gone.

There are times in the lives of persons, whether we live in the year 1000 B.C. or in the year 1978, when because of the kind of world in which we find ourselves, our souls and bodies cry out for some sense of stability and hope. The human spirit longs for more than what is happening to us out in the world. We need what might be called a journey in to our centers.

I.

That journey in to the center of our beings is called a variety of things: Becoming intentional about getting in touch with what is

going on inside of us; Focusing on the Source "in whom we live and move and have our being"; Traditionally, we have called this movement to the center "Meditation"; In contemporary terms we might call it "centering"; Henri Nouwen calls it, "Reaching Out to the Inner Self." Whatever the journey is called, it is an attempt to develop an inner sensitivity towards one's own God-given strengths, abilities, and worth, and a receptivity to God's presence and gifts.

Centering or meditation is an attempt to move beyond the simply intellectual level of life and move into the self which is both thinking and feeling--place where God gives his gifts. Mary Dell Milles describes it this way: "Meditation creates space, sees, hears, receives, empties, fills, Meditation smoothes the way, enables meeting, allows the harnessing to happen." Margaret Spies says, "I ask for time alone, a solitary retreat to calm my soul and rest my body." Where? "on a deserted beach, but the sea is far away"; "in the mountains, but that is not to be"; "only in this busy parking lot waiting for my load of kids." Or we might add at the desk or sink. Brother Lawrence, who wrote the classic devotional, "Practice of the Presence of God," whether he was doing work in the kitchen at the monastery or in his room, "applied my mind carefully to the presence of God, whom I considered always with me, often as in me."

There are a variety of ways to take this journey in to our centers. One that catches the most attention these days is TM or Transcendental Meditation. This method grew out of the Hindu religion and spread to our country. It is not promoted as religion, but as a psychological self-help program, though it has a lot of religious symbols and processes connected to it. Its widespread use among Christians might well be a judgment of the Christian faith for not meeting the deep need of persons to take this journey into their inner lives. In TM, a person may close his or her eyes for a period of 2-20 minutes. A mantra, or Sanskrit word, is chosen for each individual, which is recited over and over. The purpose of reciting the same word over and over is to cleanse one's mind of all of the other stuff that might be tumbling around in there causing stress and anxiety. A more scientific approach is the Gurdjieff method which involves attention to one's breathing. One simply becomes aware of it. The purpose again is to keep a single, subtle thought in mind. There are other ways. It would be my guess that many of you have made some helpful discoveries of ways to take this journey to the deep, inner self. I want to briefly share one method that we are suggesting for our Lenten experience, "Journey In--Journey Out." Find some place with as much quiet as possible. But the place is not as important as the solitude of the heart. I think we discovered at our coaching conference for this Lenten experience that the inner quality of solitude does not depend upon physical isolation or even the absence of noise. Get into a comfortable position. Plan to spend 10-20 minutes. Even ten minutes may seem like an eternity, but 20 minutes is a good goal "to be still and know . . ." Close your eyes.

Don't be anxious about your thoughts. Dismiss them gently as they enter your mind. Breathe deeply. Remember that your breath is the sacramental link between yourselves and life. The words breath and spirit are often interchangeable in the Scriptures. Concentrate on your breathing. Thoughts will interrupt that concentration; let those thoughts come and let them go. Concentration on your breathing will gradually diminish other distractions, and you will be receptive. This is not the end of the devotional life. We have not attempted to reach any specific goals. We have only been preparing a place for God's spirit to meet with our spirits. I encourage you to use a similar process for the beginning of public worship. So often we come to worship at the same hectic pace we live our lives. How can we slow down and become receptive? Come a few moments early. Quietly slip into your pew. Listen to the music, for that will help to crowd out other thoughts. Prepare some space within so that God's spirit can meet with your spirit.

In our kind of world we need to take the journey in to the center of ourselves. We need to get in touch with what is going on inside.

II.

Will it make any difference in our lives? Does it provide any benefits?

Change is taking place so rapidly in our kind of world that centering or meditation becomes a strategy for survival. Alvin Toffler, in his book, Future Shock, where he describes the kind of stress we face in a world of rapid change, says that one strategy for survival is to find a stability zone where we can stand to catch our breath and gain some strength before we get back into the stream of rapid change once again. We need a destimulating tactic. We need to set aside time to introvert. The saints of the faith made that discovery a long time ago, but it is interesting to have a social scientist confirm the need. The "Journey In" just might be related to survival in our kind of world.

III.

Even though this "Journey In" has such benefits for our lives in a world of stress and anxiety, this journey is often resisted. We may sense the need. We surely feel the stress. We become wound up like tight clocks with the spring ready to break, but something keeps us from taking that first step on the journey in.

Some may not begin that journey because it is just something different from what they have done before. They feel uncomfortable with the new. Twenty minutes of silence? No way, when I have to have the TV, stereo, or radio going all the time to fill that void I sense in my life.

Twenty minutes, by myself, alone, all alone? And what is all this business about concentrating on breathing and pushing out thoughts, when we value the thinking process so highly. So we resist, because we fear the new. I recognize the newness for some of you. But I invite you to risk.

Others may not begin the journey in because of the fear of aloneness. We are aware of the painful experience of loneliness in our time. We want to stay away from it. We can remember when classmates laughed at us, when peers scoffed at our ideas and we felt so alone. And now to build in 20 minutes of aloneness only makes us acutely aware of our loneliness. So we do anything possible to avoid being alone with ourselves. But I invite you to risk.

Closely related to that resistance to the "Journey In" is that we may be a bit apprehensive about what is deep inside of us. There may be an emptiness we do not want to face. There may be some shallowness in our living and thinking that we don't want to see. There may be some guilt we have been trying to keep below the level of consciousness. We fear that if we really take that look inside all of that will come rushing out and devour us. But I invite you to risk--because God accepts and forgives.

I have a hunch that the one thing that keeps most of us from taking the "Journey In" is that we are so goal oriented we feel we can't give the time. Do you realize what I can do with 20 minutes? Preach a sermon, write a couple of letters, or make a couple of phone calls. In the "Journey In" we are talking about 20 minutes of concentrating on breathing? Nothing to accomplish? No finished product? Henri Nouwen comments, "When there is no project to finish, no friend to visit, no book to read, TV to watch, record to play and we are alone, we will do everything to get busy again, and the busyness makes us believe everything is ok again." Everything we have to do is supposed to produce, whether it is work or play. But I ask if our worth is only measured by what we produce? I submit that it is not.

We resist the "Journey In" to our centers--because it is something new, or because we fear aloneness, or we may not like what we see when we get there, or we are simply too busy producing something.

CONCLUSION

Now, I invite you and myself to move beyond these resistances and take the journey in to our centers.

RISK!--Because in our kind of world, "To find a place to center is not a luxury, but a strategy for survival."

Let us pray: O God, from whom we ask so much
and in our hearts expect so little
remind us that most of what we need,
you have already given.
Teach us to be receptive.

Amen

EVALUATION FOR LEADERS OF SMALL GROUPS--"JOURNEY IN--JOURNEY OUT"

1. What was the most helpful part of the coaching conferences?

2. What was least helpful?

3. If you were designing or leading the coaching conferences, what would you do differently? Why?

4. Did the printed workbook provide you with enough "starter" material?

5. Would you be interested in being a leader/coordinator for any on-going small group?

6. Do you feel more comfortable as a leader of a small group as a result of this experience?

EVALUATION FOR ALL MEMBERS OF SMALL GROUPS--"JOURNEY IN--JOURNEY OUT"

1. What was most helpful in the small group experience?
2. What was least helpful?
3. If you were designing or leading the small group experience, what would you change? Why?
4. How would you evaluate the printed materials?
5. What was the importance of the Sunday worship having the same theme as the small groups?
6. Would you be interested in participating in an ongoing small group? If so, how often would you be willing to meet?
7. As a result of "Journey In--Journey Out" have you experienced any growth in your personal devotional life? If so, what?
8. As a result of "Journey In--Journey Out" has there been any change in how you experience Sunday worship? If so, what?

APPENDIX E

CARE AND SHARE TRAINING PROGRAM

After assessing needs within the congregation, examining the program priorities of the Council on Ministries, and discovering the programs that were already being planned for First United Methodist Church, the Adult Coordinating Committee decided that an emphasis on "caring" was needed within the life of our congregation.

They recognized that it is difficult to program caring since that should be a natural outgrowth of one's faith. But they also decided that caring could be made more intentional. The main purpose of the group would be to make persons more sensitive to possibilities for caring, not only in and through the church, but in their day-to-day relationships as well. The stated purpose was:

We propose the establishment of a group of laity, specifically chosen on the basis of their natural ability to "pastorally care" for others. The "Care and Share" group will experience and explore their faith through a study of what it means to "pastorally care," through training, and through skill development for the variety of needs that the group identifies. Individual members of the group will have the freedom to be involved in the area of need that they select on the basis of their interest or experience. The care group will be encouraged to be aggressive in seeking out persons with hurts and needs (not limited to the membership of First United Methodist Church). The "Care and Share" group will meet periodically for mutual support, further training, feedback, and evaluation.

The Committee decided that it was important to design a program that had a firm biblical and theological base, that used insights from the field of human behavior, and that provided an opportunity for

worship and prayer as a group. The sessions should focus on both the cognitive and affective dimensions of persons.

The Committee drew up a list of thirty people who seemed to have "pastoral caring" qualities. These persons were then contacted by members of the Committee. They were given a brief description of the proposed program, the training that would be available, and were invited to attend at least the first session. Fourteen people responded.

Lay members of the Committee shared in the leadership of the sessions.

I. CREATING THE GROUP

A. Goals:

1. Give an overview of a "ministry of caring."
2. Enlist persons to participate in ongoing group learning/sharing experiences, whose purpose would be to equip, motivate, and support persons in a "ministry of caring."
3. Provide enough flexibility to help persons who feel no need of an ongoing group to be more intentional about a "ministry of caring."

B. Basic Assumptions:

1. A theological assumption is an affirmation of the statement of "The Ministry of All Christians" of The Discipline of the United Methodist Church.
2. There are lay persons who have natural helping aptitudes who want to participate, in a more intentional way, in the "ministry of caring."
3. Participants are a resource. People not only receive, but they have something to offer as well.
4. Participants have emotional and spiritual needs that require a "ministry of caring."
5. Persons who have natural aptitudes for caring need the continuing discipline of in-service training.
6. Persons need to be given the opportunity to make a personal commitment to participate in a "ministry of caring."

C. Procedure:

7:30 p.m.--Gathering activity using dyads. Each person to share with the other, at whatever level they desire, three stress points in their life. Each introduced the other to the group including stress points. The stress points were listed on newsprint and identified later as opportunities for caring.

8:00 p.m.--"Why are we here?"

--To continue the ministry of Jesus.

--Background work of the Adult Coordinating Committee.

8:10 p.m.--Characteristics of a helping person to be elicited from the group and projected on wall using an overhead projector.

Break

8:30 p.m.--"We Are in This Together"--Biblical and theological basis for a ministry of caring.

8:45 p.m.--"Skills for Caring"--an overview.

9:00 p.m.--Summary and Overview of the next four sessions.

9:15 p.m.--A Time for Commitment. One of three possibilities:

1. To be a part of the "Care and Share" group.
2. To participate in the training sessions only.
3. To be more intentional about caring.

9:15 p.m.--Closing worship.

II. GROUP BUILDING

A. Goals:

1. Provide an opportunity for more extensive study of the Scriptures as a base for a caring ministry.
2. Encourage participants to affirm their gifts.
3. Give participants the opportunity to talk about meaningful faith experiences with each other.

B. Basic Assumptions:

1. It is important to have a strong biblical and theological basis for a caring ministry.
2. Each person has some unique gifts for caring that need to be affirmed.
3. Open and honest sharing with one another helps to build group trust and support.

C. Procedure:

7:30 p.m.--Gathering activity where each participant shared with the total group and listed an area where they would like to do some specific growing, based on the list of characteristics of a helping person from the previous session.

7:45 p.m.--Bible study. Four groups were each given a Scripture reference (Philippians 2:5-7; Matthew 9:35-38; Galatians 6:1-5; Ephesians 4:7-13). Each group was asked to develop a creative way to share their insights with the total group. The purpose was to develop a "mosiac of caring."

8:30 p.m.--Break.

8:35 p.m.--"What Do I Bring?" A personal writing exercise where persons were encouraged to think about their own caring gifts. This material was not to be shared.

8:50 p.m.--"Biography of Faith." One of the committee members shared what it was like to be without a caring experience when it was needed; what it was like to have a caring experience; what she now believed that she had to offer as a result of being cared for.

--Dyads were formed and persons were invited to share with another, using the process just modeled for them.

9:20 p.m.--Closing worship.

9:25 p.m.--Evaluation:

1. What was most helpful in this session?
2. What was least helpful?
3. If you were designing or leading this session, what would you change? Why?

4. One goal of the session was to build a sense of community based on a Scriptural understanding of caring. How well was that goal reached?
5. How are we doing in terms of your needs and expectations?

III. FREEING UP FOR CARING

A. Goals:

1. Begin to work at the development of trust in the group.
2. Identify forces which prevent us from caring for others.
3. Enable people to begin to act more freely on behalf of others.

B. Basic Assumptions:

1. We can learn to trust others more.
2. It is necessary to be free from resistances if we are to engage in a ministry of caring.
3. The group can help free one another up for caring.
4. Faith in Christ enables us to care for others.

C. Procedure:

7:30 p.m.--Gathering and trust walk. Discussion of feelings on the walk and trust feelings within the group.

7:50 p.m.--Review of previous session. There was the need to deal with feelings that arose over the faith biography.

8:00 p.m.--Sharing of Faith Biography by any participants.

8:20 p.m.--Break.

8:25 p.m.--"Caring and Risk Taking." Four groups were formed to explore the questions:
"What keeps me from caring?"
"What keeps me from growing?"
"What hinders me from reaching out?"
There was feedback from the groups with the responses listed on newsprint.

9:00 p.m.--"Freeing Up for Caring Through Christ." A guided meditation/reflection and worship based on Mark 10:46-52.

9:15 p.m.--Housekeeping details and evaluation.

EVALUATION OF FREEING UP FOR CARING

In our "CARE AND SHARE" group, we are concerned about the quality of our relationships. This evaluation is predominantly concerned with the group.

1. Did we really listen to one another?
2. Did we help others say what they wanted to say?

3. Did a few persons make all of the suggestions and decisions?

4. Did you feel that you were a part of the group?

Describe ways you did or didn't.

5. Did you discover anything new about yourself this session?

6. Is there any area in our sessions not covered as yet that you would like included?

7. How are you feeling about the experiences and the direction in which we are moving?

IV. TRAINING FOR CARING

A. Goals:

1. Help participants identify skills and areas of competence.
2. Training in basic listening skills.

B. Basic Assumptions:

1. Training will help free up persons for caring.
2. Responsible caring is the result of careful training.
3. Training will be an ongoing function of the group.

C. Procedure:

7:30 p.m.--Gathering experience--"Identify the kinds of caring situations you might face."

7:40 p.m.--Roadblocks to effective communication and caring:

--Five hurting situations were presented.

--Members of the group were asked to write response.

--Roadblocks to communication were presented. Parent Effectiveness Training material basic resource.

--Members were then asked to evaluate their responses.

8:10 p.m.--Break.

8:15 p.m.--Active Listening skills and skill practice.

The emphasis was upon listening for feelings as well as words. Parent Effectiveness Training material basic resource.

9:15 p.m.--"Assignment" for next three months--to be more intentional about caring. Plan to share some of those experiences in the next meeting.

9:20 p.m.--Worship.

9:25 p.m.--Evaluation (oral).

V. SHARING AND CARING

A. Goals:

1. Provide an opportunity to share caring experiences that took place over the past three months.
2. Provide for a time of worship to celebrate caring and to continue caring through prayer.
3. Seek commitment for ongoing caring and sharing.
4. Evaluate the five sessions.

B. Basic Assumptions:

1. Group support is important.
2. Sharing helps to motivate and sustain caring.
3. Group members can learn from one another.
4. Through the sharing of a variety of experiences participants are able to recognize a variety of caring possibilities.
5. Worship provides a dimension of meaning to caring.
6. Evaluation enables participants to give feedback to leaders as well as help them reflect on learnings.

C. Procedure:

7:30 p.m.--Opening Prayer and Summary of Past Sessions.

7:40 p.m.--Sharing of Caring Experiences--Opportunity given to all fourteen persons present.

8:55 p.m.--Worship: Scripture, Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession and Singing.

9:10 p.m.--Covenant Making--in one or more of categories:

1. Regular meeting once a month (11 persons).
2. Be a more caring person (10 persons).
3. Available for one-to-one sharing and caring (10 persons).
4. Available for pastor to call on me for specific caring (4 persons).

9:20 p.m.--Evaluation of all five sessions:

1. What was the most helpful in our sessions together?
2. What was least helpful?
3. If you were designing or leading this group experience, what would you change? Why?
4. Do you feel that you have either learned, developed, or discovered some skills for caring? If so, what?
5. Has participation in this group enabled you to be a more caring person? If so, in what ways?
6. As a result of the group experience, what kind of commitments have you made concerning future caring?
7. To help us understand the consequences of our training, what groups or kinds of people have been affected by your caring?
8. Any other comments you would like to make.

APPENDIX F

SERMON: "MINISTRY TOGETHER"

Exodus 19:2-6

Matthew 9:35-10:7

INTRODUCTION

When you stop to think about it, we Christians make some rather extraordinary claims about the church. We say things like: "We are not just another social organization among other social organizations"; We are God's own people." "We provide an alternate vision of what life can be." "We are people who are free to reject the patterns of the world if those patterns are harmful to people."

Those claims do not arise out of the blue. We do not sit around and make them up. It is our belief that our specialness is based in God's call for a special people in His world. God's desire to have a unique people set in the midst of his creation is seen in the Exodus event. Israel, as a nation, was held captive in Egypt for hundreds of years. Then the nation, through Moses, heard the call to come out of their bondage to become the means by which the whole world would be saved. "The whole world is mine, but you will be my chosen people." Catch that specialness as Israel, a little known group of people, is separated out from all other nations, to become priests for the entire world. In Matthew, Jesus calls out 12 disciples (we can be reasonably sure that the 12 tribes of Israel were in the back of his mind as he selected the number). These 12 were selected for a special task--to gather in the harvest. Note the continued specialness of Israel. His instructions to the 12 were, "Do not go to any Gentile territory or any Samaritan towns. Instead, you are to go to those lost sheep, the people of Israel." Jesus summons, commands, teaches, and then dispatches those he intends to show and share the saving presence of God. We believe that the church, arising out of the ministry of the 12, is the sphere where God's will and way is to be reflected.

I'm not sure why God chose that small unknown nation of Israel when he could have chosen Egypt or China, nor am I sure why God chose that small band of disciples, but in choosing Israel and the church he put upon them the stamp of uniqueness. The question we as members of that chosen group need to keep before ourselves is, "What is our specialness?" On what basis do we claim uniqueness?

I.

First of all, the church is unique in its special relationship to God through grace.

People in the church receive special caring--a gift. Jesus noted that people were harassed, like a sheep without a shepherd. They were frustrated, they were lonely, they were helpless, they lacked sensitive and faithful leadership. Jesus sensed the need for compassion, so he made an entirely different approach. He came with a gentle touch. There are many bruised, confused and hurting people in our world. We try all kinds of ways to meet the problems: alcohol, other drugs, sex, shouts, and lies, and the outcome is more people who are confused and bruised. The church has been entrusted with the message that this living Christ is still reaching out with the gentle touch. If there is any one failure that is a part of the church, it isn't that we have failed to develop social programs or that we have failed to bring about some changes in society. If there is any failure, it is that so many of us in the church have failed to receive this special gift of the gentle touch of the living Christ upon our troubled lives. Until we can receive that gift of new life and new hope, we will not understand nor experience the "specialness" God wants for us.

It probably goes without saying, but let me state it clearly anyway, that God calls ALL of his people into that special relationship with his special gift of grace. It is not just the priests of Israel that were called to be God's own people, but the entire nation. When Jesus called 12 persons out to become the building blocks for a new Israel, he did not go to the professional religious people. He called out common, ordinary persons. That is to say, professional religious people are not the ones who have been called by God for this special relationship and special gift, but all of us. In the 1976 Discipline of the United Methodist Church there is the statement on "The Ministry of All Christians." We read that all Christians have a special relationship to God based on a gift--"The gift of God's unmerited grace." It goes on to say that entrance into the Church is acknowledged in Baptism. "In this Sacrament, the Church claims God's promise"--of specialness. In the Missional Statement of Purpose accepted by First United Methodist Church, we read that we will proclaim the Good News of God's love in word and deed, will live our lives through a system of values consistent with the Gospel "because we experience God's love." It is not just clergy who are special. We all receive equally. "Laos," the root form of the word "Laity," means the "people of God" as opposed to the "people of the world." Laity thus should not be seen as "un-authorized amateurs" (Weber) nor as part-time Christians, or "just laypersons." Ordination, as understood within Protestantism at least, does not grant the ordinee any special relationship to God. There is no change in moral and spiritual characteristics. Ordination does not make one a better Christian. All baptized Christians are laity--

including bishops, District Superintendents, and pastors. We are all people of God, who in a brutal world have been treated with a touch of grace and gentleness.

The church is unique. This gathering is unique. Not because of our good behavior or because we are better than anyone else, but because of our relationship to God based on grace. God has chosen us in and through the ministry of Jesus. To be a part of that uniqueness, all we have to do is to respond to that gift so freely given.

II.

The church is also unique because God has given us a task that He has given to no one else. We have been on the receiving end of the ministry of Jesus. Now we are called to continue His ministry. Jesus gave to the disciples and then he sent them out as envoys to do what he had been doing--authority to cast out demons, to heal diseases, and to preach that the Kingdom of God is near.

The special relationship we have with God, because of His gift, will express itself in ministry to the world. The church is to be a symbol, or at the very least, a hint of God's eternal kingdom. A concern that I have as I look at myself and the church, however, is that we are too much like the world to be that symbol. Another significant failure of the church is our unwillingness to be what we are called to be--a new community, created by Christ. The church, the new community in Christ, ought not reflect the same divisions that exist in the world. Race, sex, class, should have no power over us. The kinds of things that happen in the world should have their power broken here: greed, materialism, fear. Jim Wallis, in Agenda for Biblical People, suggests that the established church, which is meant to be different, has become so wedded to the mindset of those around us that when issues arise we are captive to our culture and we are morally impotent.

But that is not a part of our vision!! The statement of "Ministry of All Christians" in The Discipline reminds us that "All Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of outreaching love. The Christian Church, as the Body of Christ, is that community whose members share both his mind and mission." And the Missional Statement of Purpose of First United Methodist Church says, as followers of Christ, in our personal and corporate life, we will proclaim the Good News of God's love in word and deed, and we will live our lives through a system of values consistent with the Gospel. We are special in that we are a called out people. We are freed, by Christ, from the power of the world and enabled to have and to live a new vision. As Christians, we are freed to reject the patterns of this world in favor of the new we see in Jesus Christ.

Once again, we are all called to be priests to the world. The call to mutual ministry is given to the whole community and not to isolated individuals, who may happen to be ordained. This is first of all meant to be a corrective reminder to persons like myself. When a church is dominated by clergy, laity begin to see themselves as dependent persons. The image of a good layperson becomes one who spends a lot of time in the religious world of church activities. I would be the first to admit that we ministers often try to push our own ideas and want to run the show, including formulating motions in administrative meetings! Bonhoeffer, in his little book, Life Together, pricks my conscience when he says that "pastors should not complain about a congregation's unresponsiveness to our dreams. Maybe they are dreams that need to be shattered so we might all see more clearly God's will for the congregation."

God calls a whole people to ministry in which individual members have a share--not just the clergy. The unique insights into the way people can get along can be carried and lived out most effectively when all of the laity minister beyond the walls of the church. Outside the doors of the church each one of us can listen to hurts, to cries too deep to put into words, can share burdens, and can protest against false absolutes and false saviors. We can remind persons that our salvation is not in politics, economics, or professional religious people, but in Jesus Christ, who brings the gift that frees us to walk in newness of life.

Now we may feel uneasy with that understanding of the church. We may not feel equipped to accept that specialness God has given us in the tasks he has set before us. We may not be able to think theologically and biblically when we are called upon to make decisions as a Church or even personally. We recognize that we are too much influenced by the current ideas of the world around us. But, rather than use our lack of knowledge as an excuse not to respond to the special tasks to which God has called us, it seems to me that we should be driven to the Scriptures and to study groups to become more aware of our uniqueness as a people called out by God for special tasks.

CONCLUSION

A curious feature of our Scripture for today is what seems to be a rather limited focus. As members of the church we see ourselves as special, one people chosen from among all people to receive both a gift and a task. It seems that God concentrates His energy and His intention in one area, before they are shared throughout the world.

Morris Niedenthal provides us with an analogy to help clarify this biblical concept. A charge from a spark plug generates little or no power in a cylinder without a piston to compress the gaseous air.

Diffused, the gaseous air remains relatively powerless. Only as it is concentrated and compressed will a charge transform it into effective power.

So it is with God's energy and rule. They are concentrated in a people, in specific places and in definite times in order that they might become effective power in and for the world. Through this concentration persons who do not know of God's love and rule, will be confronted and invited to respond. To be a part of that confrontation in our community is both our gift and our task--together!!